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# Jajarkot Non-Formal Education Project of the United Mission to Nepal: Reflections on a Personal Experience in an Adult Literacy and Community Development Project

Tanja-Birgit Soderstrom

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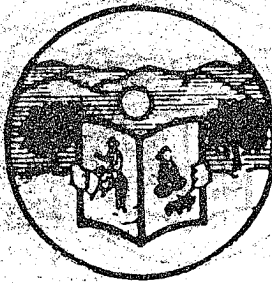
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JAJARKOT NON-FORMAL EDUCATION PROJECT OF  
THE UNITED MISSION TO NEPAL.

Reflections on a Personal Experience in an Adult Literacy  
and Community Development Project.



CIE Master's Project Presented

by

Tanja-Birgit Söderström

In fulfillment of the course requirements for Ed 3-793 W,  
and in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

February 1993

Center for International Education  
Division 3  
School of Education  
University of Massachusetts

**DEDICATION.**

To David,

my husband and best friend,  
whose love and support has been so invaluable to me  
as I worked on this report.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Secondly I want to thank those people at the UMN HQ who encouraged me to pursue a Master's Degree, and especially those in the Education Department offices who helped me in so many ways with information and ideas through the whole process.

Thanks also to the Gsellman family and all the other co-workers in the Jajarkot Project, for both personal and professional support, that made my time in the project useful and positive.

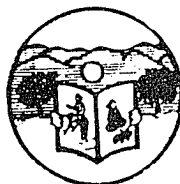
I am also greatly indebted to SIDA, the Swedish International Development Authority, (via PMU-Interlife of the Swedish Free Mission) and my sending church Sala Filadelfia, for their economic support during my time of study in the US, as well as during all my years of work in Nepal.

Finally, there would have been none of this report without the involvement of the people of the Jajarkot District. I want to especially thank the courageous women of the Khalanga class, who struggle to support and care for their families, while adding the burden of nightly classes to their busy lives. Lilawati, Bali, Kaushila, Radhika, Netri, Sabitri, and all the others, who patiently endured being trial-objects for new teaching methodologies, and who had some fun in the process. I hope they have learnt as much from the process as I have! Last, but not least, my thanks go to my facilitator-helper Parbati, who helped carry out the trial class, offered useful suggestions and insights, was ever patient with me and the learners, and has continued her commitment to teach the class since I left.

Acton (Massachusetts, USA) in December 1992.  
Tanja-Birgit Söderström.

### Jajarkot NFE Project

A Non-Formal Education Project  
of the United Mission to Nepal



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युनाइटेड मिशन टु नेपाल

**थान्या-बिर्गीत् सोडरस्ट्रम्**

अनौपचारिक शिक्षा विशेषज्ञ

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AKP	Andhikhola Project, an integrated hydro-electric, rural electrification and rural development project of the United Mission to Nepal, located in Syangja District, Gandaki Zone, Western Development Region. Andhikhola is the river which is put to use for hydro power and irrigation.
BEd	Bachelor of Education.
BSc	Bachelor of Science
CDO	Chief District Officer, the highest official representing the central government at the district level.
DCS	Development and Consulting Services, a appropriate technology project of the United Mission to Nepal, located in Butwal, Rupandehi District, Lumbini Zone, Western Development Region.
DEI	District Education Inspector, representative of the Ministry of Education and Culture who oversees district level educational matters.
FIVDB	Friends in Village Development Bangladesh, an indigenous NGO working in adult literacy and community development in rural Bangladesh.
HMGN	His Majesty's Government of Nepal.
HQ	Head-Quarter
INSAN	Institute for Sustainable Agriculture Nepal, a Nepali NGO involved in promoting the philosophy of Permaculture, an alternative agriculture methods system.
KIFF	Khalanga Integrated Fruit Farm, a local Jajarkot NGO involved in alternative farming promotion and training. Used to be under INSAN but is now independent.
Ktm	Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal.
KTS	Karnali Technical School, a vocational school offering Intermediate Science level training in health, agriculture and forestry and construction, jointly administrated by United Mission to Nepal and Ministry of Education and Culture, located in Jumla District, Karnali Zone, Mid-Western Development Region.

LDO	Local Development Officer, a district level government representative who oversees local infra-structure development efforts, such as drinking water systems, etc.
MEd	Master of Education.
MMM	Monthly Management Meeting, a term from planning documents for Jajarkot project. This meeting will be the forum for planning and coordination of the project's various activities.
MOEC	Ministry of Education and Culture (Nepal).
MP	Member of Parliament.
NG	Naya Goreto adult literacy primer set, developed by MOEC and widely used in adult education projects.
NGO	Non-Government Organization.
RDC	Rural Development Center of the United Mission to Nepal, serving NGOs in Nepal with training and consulting in various subjects. Located in Pokhara, Kaski District, Gandaki Zone, Western Development Region.
RNAC	Royal Nepal Airlines Corporation.
SIL	Summer Institute of Linguistics, the academic branch of WBT. (See below.)
SLC	School Leaving Certificate, awarded after 10 years of schooling and the passing of a national exam.
SSNCC	Social Services National Coordinating Committee, which coordinates the work of most NGOs in Nepal.
STOL	Short Take Off and Landing, a term for small airplanes designed to use short airstrips.
UMN	United Mission to Nepal, an international interdenominational Christian mission, with 39 member missions from about 20 different countries.
UNDP	United Nations Development Program.
VDC	Village Development Committee, smallest unit of local government in Nepal.
WBT	Wycliffe Bible Translators, an international interdenominational Christian Mission involved in language research and Bible translation.

## GLOSSARY

Aaphno manchhe	Literally "ones own person", used to describe a bonded relationship between patron and client, common in Jajarkot.
Bahun	Nepali for Brahmin, traditionally the caste of priests and scholars.
Jeewan Jol	Literally "life liquid", name for oral rehydration fluid.
Ashar	The third month of the Nepali calendar, about 15 June - 15 July.
Asoj	The sixth month of the Nepali calendar, about 15 Sept - 15 Oct.
Baishakh	The first month of the Nepali calendar, about 15 April - 15 May.
Bhadau	The fifth month of the Nepali calendar, about 15 Aug - 15 Sept.
Bikram Sambat	The era upon which Nepal's time count is based, it is presently the year 2049.
Chaitra	The twelfth month of the Nepali calendar, about 15 March - 15 April.
Chapati	Unleavened, flat, circular wheat breads, baked on a dry frying pan and eaten with curry.
Charpi	Nepali word for latrine.
Cheli-Beti	Nepali for girls/sisters.
Chhetri	Traditionally the caste of kings and warriors.
Chulo	Nepali for wood fueled stove, mostly made of stone and mud mortar.
Damai	Traditionally the caste of tailors and wedding musicians.
Dasain	The greatest festival of the year in Nepal, celebrating the goddess Kali's victory over evil. Takes place around Sept-Oct.
Devanagari	The name of the script used for Nepali, Hindi and Sanskrit languages.

Gamakka chhe	Nepali for pleased with herself.
Gangetic plains	The plains of Northern India and southern Nepal, where the river Ganges flows.
Gaun	Nepali for village.
Gobar Gas	Gobar means dung, and Gobar Gas is the methane gas produced from fermenting organic matter (cattle dung is most commonly used).
Grameen Bank	Means the Rural Bank, a grass-roots movement bank that serves as a social development catalyst in Bangladesh.
Ilaka	Subdivision of a district.
Jesth	The second month of the Nepali calendar, about 15 May - 15 June.
Kaanchhii	A relationship term for the last born daughter, or the last born son's wife.
Kami	Traditionally the caste of blacksmiths.
Kartik	The seventh month of the Nepali calendar, about 15 Oct - 15 Nov.
Khetii	Nepali for farming or farm field work.
Krishi Bikas Bank	Agriculture Development Bank of Nepal.
Krishi	Agriculture.
Magar	A mongolian tribe whose mother-tongue belongs to the Tibeto-Burmese language group.
Mathi	Nepali for upper or on top of.
Naya Goreto	The adult literacy primer series produced by MOEC for Nepal.
Newar	A tribe from the Ktm valley who speak a Tibeto-Burmese-group mother-tongue.
Paush	The ninth month of the Nepali calendar, about 15 Dec - 15 Jan.
Peon	A staff position combining office care-taker with mail-runner, etc.
Phant	Nepali for alluvial-deposit flat land.



Sajha	Nepali for cooperative, although it is often used for government businesses.
Sanskrit	The language of Hindu scriptures, from which all the Sanskrit group languages originated. It is a "dead" language, existing only in literature and religious liturgies (much like latin).
Sarbottam Pito	Literally "the very best flour", used to name a special nutritious mixture of roasted and ground grains and legumes, that can be made in the home and used as a weaning food for small children.
Shrawan	The fourth month of the Nepali calendar, about 15 July - 15 Aug.
Thakuri	Traditionally the king and warrior and ruler caste, sometimes said to be a subgroup under the Chhetri caste, other times said to be above them.
Tihar	The second greatest festival of Nepal, where the main focus of worship is Laxmi, the goddess of wealth. It occurs in November.

## CHAPTER 1

### BACKGROUND.

Between 1983 and 1990 I worked for a total of 5 ½ years as an Agroforester in rural community development, in the Andhikhola Project (AKP) of the United Mission to Nepal (UMN). My specific task was to find ways to increase the involvement of village women in the various activities of the project. I found that learning to read and write and calculate, were high on the scale of expressed needs of women in the area. To attempt to respond to this need, and also to utilize it as a vehicle for other teaching, I designed an adult literacy program which included a lot of practical activities that the class would do together. In this way the learners could explore and learn the backgrounds and techniques of the available alternatives of new methods and practices, to enable them to make more educated choices as they tried to improve the lives of their families.

When my assignment in AKP was coming to an end, it was suggested that I should study for a Master's level degree, before returning for another term of work in Nepal. Although my BSc was in agriculture, forestry and vocational education, I now felt the need to concentrate more on methods of transfer of knowledge specifically suited to the rural development situation. I decided to join a program

where I could learn more about the methods for non-formal education (NFE) and adult literacy, which I had found myself needing in my work.

Already when I left Nepal in May 1990 to go for study in the US, it was planned that upon return I would be assigned to the Jajarkot NFE Project. That project was then at the planning stage. For the purpose of applying my learning to my future assignment, I decided to use the Jajarkot Project as an example for every possible class paper in my various courses for the MEd.

The subjects that I dealt with in my class papers were: "Adult Literacy Issues in Planning of Jajarkot Project", "Project Management Plan for Jajarkot Project", "Training Tool for Helping to Identify Community Development Needs In Adult Literacy Classes", "Evaluation Plan for Jajarkot Project" and "Facilitator's Manual for Naya Goreto Second Step of the Nepali Adult Literacy Primer Series" (materials produced by Nepal's Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC), and widely used by most organizations involved in adult literacy in Nepal. During my previous term in Nepal, a facilitator's manual was only available for the First Step book).<sup>1</sup>

My Master's Project consists of a practicum of 7 months of work in Jajarkot from Nov 91 until May 92, and a report on that work. The report will cover the history of the

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<sup>1</sup>We recently heard that MOEC and World Education's Ktm office, are working on a completely new set of literacy primers to replace the NG materials.

Jajarkot Project so far, and give an account of my specific work experience there. Within that I will give some detailed attention to a class that I facilitated together with a local helper, for the purpose of trying out new methodology ideas.

This will be followed by several reflective sections. In the first few of them, I will attempt to examine some of the factors related to the task of facilitating the adult learner groups to move on from literacy acquisition to community development activities of their own choosing. This will be partly in response to questions that have been raised by the UMN HQ-based leadership, to help guide the project in its planning process.

## CHAPTER 2

### JAJARKOT PROJECT HISTORY.<sup>2</sup>

#### 2.1 The UMN.

The United Mission to Nepal (UMN) is an international, inter-denominational Christian mission that has been involved in various kinds of development work in Nepal since 1954. The UMN is divided into four functional departments: Education, Rural Development, Engineering and Industrial Development and Health Services.

Non-formal education methods are being used in different settings in the work of all four functional boards. Many of the projects have adult literacy class programs, and the classes are often used as the vehicle for reaching the communities with other extension activities. In some projects the literacy classes are the main starting points for community work, and other activities follow on from needs that have surfaced in the discussions that are part of the literacy learning process.

#### 2.2 Request from MOEC.

In 1989 the UMN received a request from the Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC) of His Majesty's Government of Nepal (HMGN) to take on one of Nepal's 75 districts for a

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<sup>2</sup>The sources of this history information are various project reports, and personal communication with the Project Director Bob Gsellman and the Business Assistant Bhawani Sharma.

district wide adult literacy campaign. This is part of a major effort in adult literacy to meet basic needs of the population by the year AD 2000. Recognizing the need for joint efforts, the MOEC gave similar requests to all the non-government organizations (NGOs), multi-lateral and bi-lateral aid agencies which had any experience in the field of adult literacy work.

UMN responded positively to the request, on the condition that it would be allowed to link the adult literacy classes with other development activities, such as training in income generation skills, etc.

For this work the UMN chose the Jajarkot District. Some of the major reasons for the choice were; its remoteness, low adult literacy level - especially among women, poverty, lack of external resources input by other NGOs, etc.

### 2.3 Area Description.

Jajarkot District is a middle hills area in the Bheri Zone of the Western Development Region. Its altitude varies from 610-5412 m above sea level. The closest STOL (Short Take Off and Landing) airport lies in the neighboring Musikot District, 3-5 hrs walk from the Jajarkot District Headquarter (HQ). This airport is served by 19-seat Twin Otter planes, on an unreliable, weather dependent schedule; for Nepal's capital Kathmandu (=Ktm) once a week; to the road-head connected town Tulsipur in Dhang also once a week;

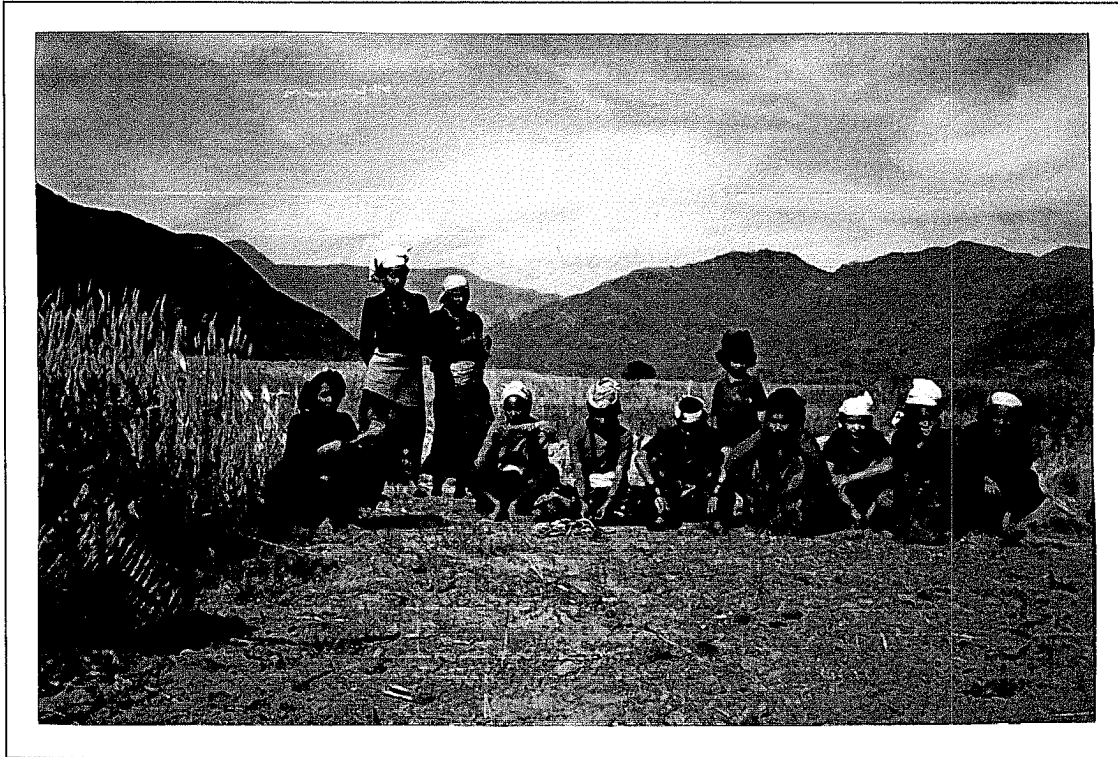


Fig. 1: Village women in Kudu taking a pause from harvesting lentils. The literacy rate among adult women in Jajarkot district is reported to be only 1 %.

and Nepalghanj on the Terai (Gangetic plains in the south, bordering India) 5 times per week. The closest road-head for buses and trucks is two days (3-7 days for porters, depending on load size) walk to the south. Supplies are brought in either by porters or mule trains, and sometimes by regular air freight or chartered freight planes.

The district HQ town is called Khalanga, and lies close to the southern border with Musikot District. It used to be the residence of a semi-independent king (Raja), and its history is quite old. Its situation on 3 steep hill tops, speaks of times when the need for defence against neighboring kingdoms mattered the most. The former King's Palace is now the CDO's (Chief District Officer) office and

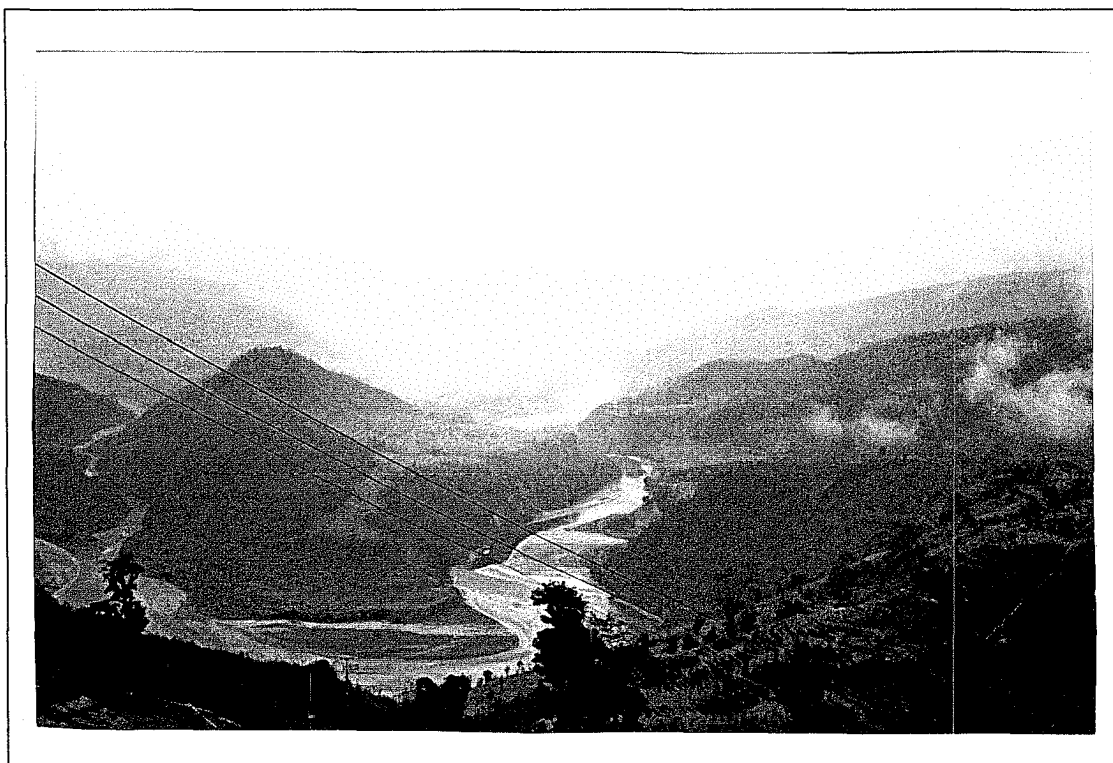


Fig. 2: The Bheri River, which gives the Zone its name, seen from Jajarkot Project office courtyard in Khalanga bazaar.

residence, and the Jajarkot Raja now lives in Kathmandu.

The ruling class of Khalanga and Jajarkot, are the Shahs and Shahis, all related to the royal family. The area is still very much under a "feudal" system, with strong ties of interdependence between upper class landowners and their tenants and occupational caste workers. The latter are often tied to particular upper class families with bonds of being so-called "aaphno maanchhe" (literally: ones own person). Such persons do not get paid when they are called to do occasional labor tasks, but instead can count on getting some help from their benefactors whenever they are in need. For supplying all the clothes / iron tools / leather artifacts, etc., that the patron family needs in a



year, the occupational caste family gets paid in food grain at a set rate per year.

This hilly district is inhabited by a majority of Nepali mother tongue speaking people of different castes. Discrimination on grounds of caste is outlawed in Nepal since many years. However, it is not illegal to uphold caste. The traditional taboos between the higher and lower castes are still in effect in the area. For occupation, the Brahmins were traditionally the priests, but most of them are farmers as well, and many are civil servants and teachers. The Thakuris and Chhetris were traditionally warriors and rulers, and now they are found being farmers and civil servants of various prosperity levels, as well as making up the majority of the elite. The occupational castes of leather workers, blacksmiths, goldsmiths, tailors, etc., are also mostly farmers beside their traditional occupation. They still have to deal with the burden of untouchability, and their children are under-represented all the way through the education system. In the Khalanga bazaar (and possibly in other bazaars in the district) live some Newars, a people originating from Kathmandu valley. They have become the main group involved in business and trading in Nepal, and have migrated to bazaar areas all over the country. There are a few villages of Magars. Both Newars and Magars are Mongolian tribes that have different languages belonging to the Tibeto-Burmese group (Nepali belongs to the Sanskrit group). However, according to the

sensus information, few (if any) tribal people of the Jajarkot district speak their mother-tongues anymore.



Fig. 3: A farming family carrying home loads of newly harvested lentil plants, to be dried and threshed on the sunbaked mud floor of their courtyard.

The major occupation of Jajarkot inhabitants is farming. The district is deficient in food production for its population and imports grain from the Terai. Most hill families cannot produce enough to feed themselves all year round, and hence many men migrate to India during the winter as seasonal laborers.

For more statistical information from the district, see table # 1.

Baishakh 5, 2048).<sup>3</sup> During that time they found a house to rent for office and staff quarters, and settled a rental agreement. They also opened a local bank account and ordered furniture for the office and staff quarters from the local wood workshop.

## 2.5 Local Staff Employed.

Bhawani Sharma was an experienced administrative worker, who heard about the project and showed interest in joining the staff. With excellent recommendations from government officials, as being honest and conscientious, he was hired as Business Assistant (to become Business Manager after training).

A peon was needed and so Janak Malla was hired on good recommendations from the public health office, where he had been a vaccine carrier.

When the preparatory tour of Jajarkot was completed, Bhawani travelled with the senior staff to Ktm. There he had 2.5 days of in-service training at UMN HQ Accounts Office, on UMN's rules and accounting system.

Returning to Jajarkot, Bhawani supervised cleaning out and white washing of the office building, furniture making and latrine construction. He also began spreading general

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<sup>3</sup> Nepal uses its own calendar, where the new year starts in mid-April of the Gregorian calendar, with the month of Baishakh. Nepal is presently in the year 2049 of the Bikram Sambat Era. I have tried to give both calendars' dates whenever I had the necessary information available (the number of days in the Nepali months, are somewhat different from year to year).

knowledge information about the project informally, to those who were enquiring.

## 2.6 Senior Staff Arrival.

On 91-05-02 (Baishakh 19) the project director Bob Gsellman (a medical doctor with 10 years experience at UMN's Patan Hospital in the capital) and family (total 4 people), arrived with a chartered UNDP plane, carrying office equipment and class materials for the first season.

The NFE program-in-charge, Krishna Neupane, had previously been a consultant and trainer at UMN HQ NFE Resource Office in Ktm for about 10 years. He and his wife, Menuka (who was hired as project secretary, since such skills seemed unavailable in Jajarkot), arrived in the project area on 91-05-16 (Jesth 2).

Initially field visits were made to several villages in two VDCs ( = Village Development Committees, smallest administrative unit, there are presently 30 VDCs in the whole district. When population increases, new VDCs are usually formed to keep them small in population numbers). One of them, Jagtipur, had been contacted as a possible starting area already at the first survey trip to Jajarkot in early 1990. The other, Khalanga, is the VDC of the district headquarter, and there were thoughts of starting work in some of the more backward communities of it. Among those visited were Rahut, Sjala, Dara, Risang, and also Maidi and Dinga, where the population are mainly Magar.

## 2.7 The Local Red Cross Society.

During this time it became clear that there had been a lack of coordination at the central level of MOEC. Jajarkot had been presented to UMN as a district where no other NGO was working. This fact was one of UMN's reasons for choosing the district. However, after the move to the project area, it became known to the project staff that Nepal Red Cross had also received an agreement to work with community development in Jajarkot District. Their agreement was with SSNCC (Social Services National Coordinating Committee), and MOEC. Their work area was stated to be Ilaka No 1 (subdivision of district, in Jajarkot there are about 3 VDCs in each Ilaka, the whole district having 9 Ilakas), which includes Khalanga and Jagtipur. On 91-06-04 they had made a baseline survey of Jagtipur VDC.

On 91-09-25 the UMN Jajarkot Project staff were able to have a consultation meeting with the local Red Cross Society officials about how to solve this problem. Since the Red Cross program was not yet ready to commence at that time, and because of UMN's early contacts with the villagers in Jagtipur, it was decided that the UMN project would conduct 10 basic course classes for one season in that area and then hand them over to Red Cross for the follow-up year. At that time the UMN project would move on to Ilaka No 2, and start work there with new basic course classes.

## 2.8 The NFE Workers.

On the district level, the MOEC is represented by the District Education Inspector (DEI), and his office oversees the formal schools as well as any adult literacy classes run in conjunction with the schools. Liaison was established between the project and the DEI from the very beginning. One important interaction was the clearing of the criteria set for employment of 10 new project staff called NFE Workers.

The NFE Workers were to be the future supervisors of village literacy facilitators. The name NFE Worker was chosen to try to avoid the association with the authoritarian interaction style, which the local villagers and the NFE Workers themselves, have experienced from other so called "supervisors".

These NFE Workers would receive a basic training of 4 weeks, which also would be the ground for the final selection of 10 out of 15 trainees. Thereafter they would be trainees for 8 months while teaching one literacy class each together with a local facilitator, who had been chosen by their respective communities. These facilitators would also take part in the basic training.

Invitations for applications to the NFE Worker posts were sent out to all the district's VDCs during the second half of May 91. It is questionable if the VDC officials in all places really published the invitations in such a manner that everybody got a fair chance to know about the

opportunity. Some of the NFE Workers have told us that it was only due to people travelling back and forth a lot at that time (because of the multi-party general elections for national parliament, the first for over 30 years), that the word about the job openings got fairly well disseminated.

After screening of the applications, selected candidates were interviewed during the time period from 15 June to 15 July ( i.e. the month of Ashar). See Appendix B for interview guidelines and selection criteria.

On 91-07-21 (5 Shrawan) the official inauguration ceremony of the Project Office was held. Present were the Chief District Officer (CDO), Local Development Officer (LDO), DEI, and other government office representatives as well as all local political party officials and other local community leaders.

The names of those persons selected for the NFE worker training were posted (as well as notices sent to those persons by mail) on 91-07-31 (15 Shrawan, 2048).

## 2.9 The Class Allocation Process.

During the time of preparation for class allocation, all the 9 wards of Jagtipur VDC were visited a total of 3 times each. Discussions were held with village leaders, in which the program was explained and the responsibilities of the communities who wanted to be involved were made clear. Those responsibilities include: Establishment of a management committee for the class; selection of a local

volunteer facilitator to be sent to the basic training and then be responsible for teaching the class for 8 months (together with the NFE Worker trainee assigned to that village); provision of class meeting place where participants of all castes can be welcome; provision of kerosene for the lighting; presentation of name-list of interested participants age 15-45, especially encouraging women to attend; organizing collection of a small monthly fee from participants to be put into a fund for community development activities; etc.

There were many problems encountered in the process of class organization. Several places sent a facilitator to the training but had presented no name list of participants. Others were not able to establish a management committee. In some, the final organization of the class and committee had to be done after the training, or even after the NFE Worker had moved out to the village to start teaching the class.

#### 2.10 The NFE Worker Basic Training.

The 4 weeks basic training was held from Aug 19 - Sept 13, 1991. For the headlines on the schedule, see Appendix C. The project's NFE Program In-charge was the main trainer, with the assistance of two consultants from UMN HQ NFE Resource Office; Norma Kehrberg and S.B. Subasi. The Project Director and representatives of various government



and NGO extension offices, helped with special subject sessions.

The support staff also participated in the training to various degrees. This was seen to be important for them to get acquainted with the ideas of NFE and the goals of the project's work. The Project Director and the secretary were present for the entire training, while the Business Assistant and the Peon took part as much as was possible for their respective work tasks.

The first week of the training was mainly devoted to the philosophies undergirding NFE for community development. The sessions of the second week were mostly given to teaching-methodology and practice sessions. Two literacy classes were established in Khalanga Bazaar itself to give the trainees real life practice. There were weekly feedback sessions from trainees to trainers, as well as a final evaluation done by the trainees. The trainees also had to take a final written test on the subject matter learned.

During the beginning of the week after the training, the project staff did an internal evaluation, both of the training itself, as well as of the trainees, to decide on the final selection of NFE Workers.

The total number of trainees was 25, made up of 15 NFE Worker applicants and 10 village facilitators. They were all given a daily allowance to cover for their time spent away from their homes and work. After the training, 10 of the 15 were selected to be employed for the NFE Worker

trainee posts, each on an 8 months contract, to be evaluated for further employment after their village teaching experience. 3 of the 10 selected were women, and they were the only ones with IA certificates (Intermediate Arts = 2 years in college after SLC, the School Leaving Certificate after 10 years schooling and a national exam). The men all had their SLCs only. The three women and two of the men came from Khalanga, while the others were from more remote areas of the district. The caste make up of the group was: One Kami, two Newars, 3 Thakuris and 4 Chhetris. The list of those selected NFE Workers was sent to the DEI's office on 91-9-18 (4 Asoj, 2048).

Out of those trainees not selected, the highest scoring two were offered to continue teaching the two Khalanga practice-classes on facilitator stipends, with a promise that if they did well in that, they would be selected for NFE Worker posts in the next year's batch. However, both these persons declined the offer, and the project was not able to find any other facilitators for the Khalanga classes that the participants could accept. Those classes were therefore discontinued.

#### 2.11 NFE Worker Placements and Start of Classes.

After their selection, the 10 were taken for a one day visit to all the 9 wards of Jagtipur VDC. Class allocation was to be five in each of the two geographically different halves of the VDC; the upper Jagtipur hills and the Kudu

"phant" (alluvial flat land next to the river). A major deciding factor in the placement of the NFE Workers was to avoid placing the women in the Kudu area. This area was renowned for a lot of drinking problems, causing concern for the safety of women extension workers having to live there and go to classes in the evenings.

At the time of the conclusion of the training, most of the villagers were still busy with agricultural field work for the season. The biggest annual festival of Dasain was also coming up Oct 12-18 (26 Asoj - 1 Kartik). The NFE Workers' employment starting date was on Oct 18 (1 Kartik), and they moved out to their allocated villages during that week. Wherever possible, they started their classes immediately, and most classes took about a week break for Tihar, the second largest annual festival (in first week of Nov).

These festivals of Dasain and Tihar, are always the main occasion for out-of-district staff to take most of their annual leave, so Menuka and Krishna Neupane were away from the project approximately Oct 12 - Nov 11 (26 Asoj - 25 Kartik). Bhawani Sharma, being a locally based person, only took 3 days for Dasain and 2 for Tihar.

The goal for supervision and follow-up of the NFE Worker trainees was set to: 3 visits to their classes per month by senior staff, and bi-monthly 2 day follow-up gatherings in the project office. Because of under-staffing on the senior level, and also their needing to be away in

Ktm for various business from time to time, it was not possible to reach that goal. Some months each worker was barely visited once. The first follow-up training was conducted 2.5 months after classes started, i.e. in the beginning of Jan 92.

## CHAPTER 3

### REPORT OF MY WORK IN JAJARKOT NOV 91 - MAY 92

#### 3.1 A Diary

##### 3.1.1 Introduction to Diary.

This diary of my time in Jajarkot Project is intentionally quite detailed, especially concerning the practical aspects. This is to give the reader a feeling of what it is really like to try to live and work (and to try to meet those lofty theoretical goals that we learn about in the academic environment!) in a situation which poses many logistical problems.

The Diary is also intended to relate observations from the literacy class program to form the background for the reflective sections that follow.

##### 3.1.2 November in Kathmandu and AKP.

The month of November I spent in Ktm, preparing to move out to Jajarkot. The question of how my luggage and household equipment should be transported out, caused considerable trouble. No charter for project equipment was planned in the near future, regular air freight shipment with RNAC is unreliable as to when it gets shipped, and up until then no equipment had been sent to the project by unaccompanied porters. Finally it was decided that I should

wait for Bob Gsellman to arrive in Ktm for business, so we could get his advice. In the event, the luggage was sent by UMN truck to Butwal, where DCS (Development and Consulting Services, a UMN Project) put it on another truck for Nepalghanj. There it was stored by the UMN liaison, Anil Shrestha.

Meanwhile, my sending mission representative to the UMN annual board meeting had arrived in Kathmandu.

Since I was the only worker in UMN from my sending mission at that time, I requested permission to take her for a visit to the Andhikhola Project, the place of my previous assignment.

She had represented our

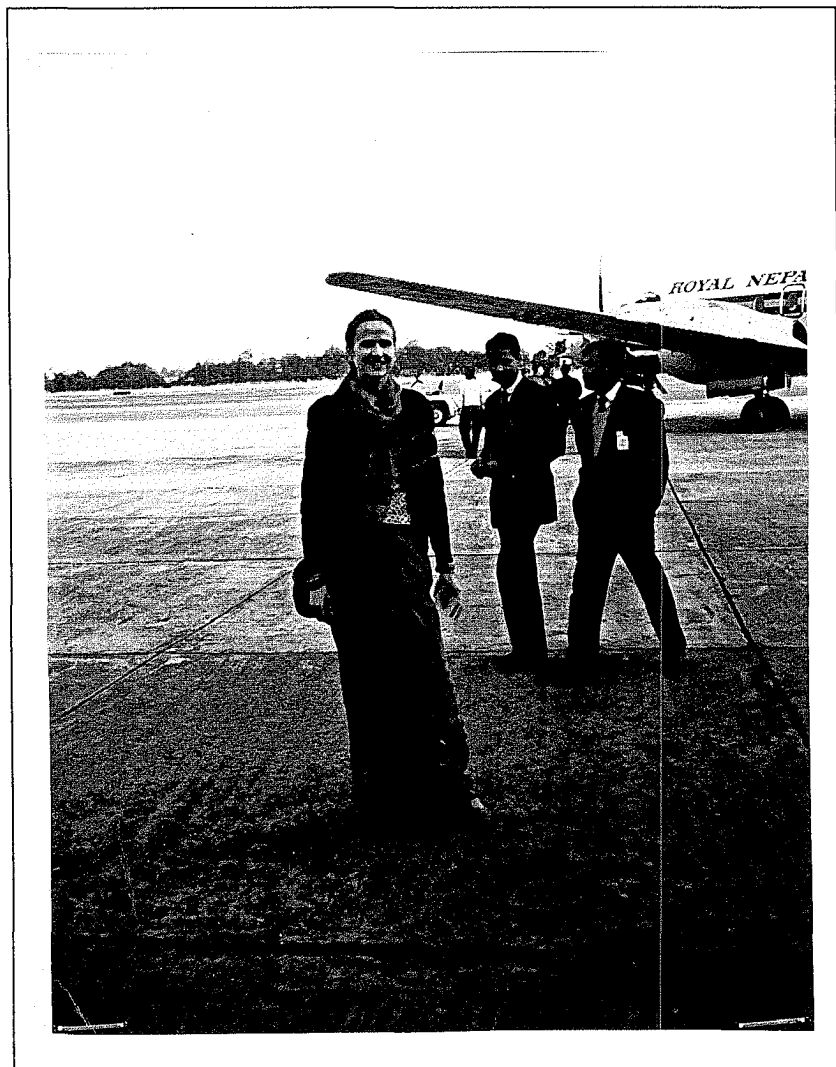


Fig. 4: At Kathmandu Airport domestic terminal, waiting for the flight to Pokhara. (Photo by Barbro Carlsson.)

mission on the UMN Board for 3 years, but never before had the time to see anything outside the Kathmandu valley.

We flew to Pokhara and rented a UMN project jeep there to take us the 3 hour drive south to Andhikhola. After a 2 day visit there, I saw the board representative off on a jeep to return to Ktm, and then I got onto the night bus coming through from Pokhara to Nepalghanj. In Nepalghanj I contacted the liaison officer. One day later Bob Gsellman arrived together with Bhawani Sharma and Janak Malla. Bob had decided that it would be useful for them all to find out about this route for portering from Nepalghanj to Jajarkot. They had brought along porters from Jajarkot and left them waiting one day's bus-ride up in the hills, where the walking trail starts.

### 3.1.3 December on the Trail to Jajarkot.

We hired a horse cart for the luggage to get from the liaison's storage to the bus park, and a couple of bicycle rickshaws for ourselves. We could only hope that the cart owner wouldn't get tempted by the thought of what expensive goods this foreigner's luggage might contain, and take off and sell it all! In the event it all arrived safely, if late, and was secured to the roof of a bus.

After a half day's dusty and shaky bus ride we met up with the porters and they set about to choose their loads. The payment is set per kg for each specific distance, so each of them tries to take as much as he feels he can

possibly handle, to get the most profit out of the trip. All except one of the porters turned out to be inexperienced young boys, and they (and we) soon found out that they had taken on more than they were able to walk with at normal speed. One extra porter also had to be hired from the point of departure.

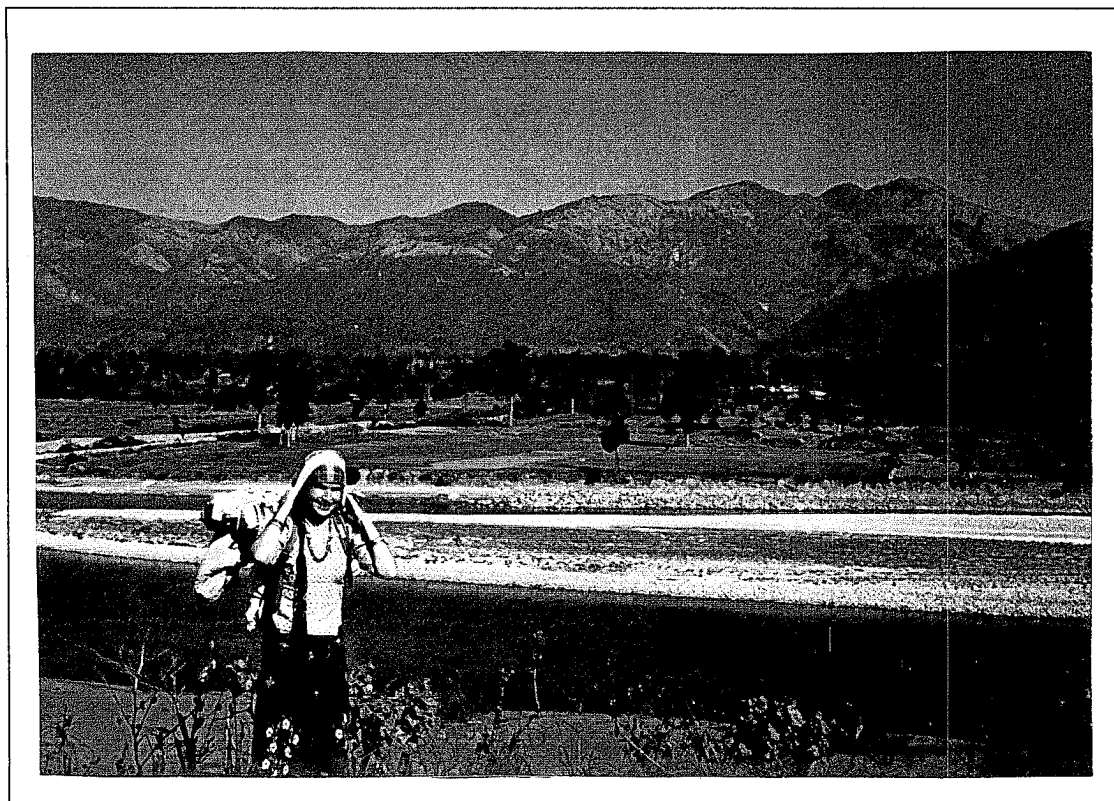


Fig. 5: Walking to Jajarkot along the Bheri River. (Photo by Bob Gsellman.)

There was only a few hours of day light left of the first day, after getting off the bus and organizing the loads. The overnight stay was a chilly experience, in a big upstairs room with no side walls, of a log house in a forest clearing. The next day we met up with the great river Bheri, which we would be following almost all the way to Jajarkot.



After the second night, we found that the local porter had left his load and sneaked off before anybody else was awake. His load had been an awkward, but not very heavy plastic drum. To find a porter in a town along the route looked impossible, and we were contemplating leaving the load in the care of the hotel owner, to be sent for by a Jajarkot porter later. It contained my bedding and all my clothes, except for the ones I was wearing and one set of change that I was carrying with me!

Quite unexpectedly we found a Jajarkoti young man from Janak's village, returning from some government training course. After a bit of bargaining, he agreed to take on the load.

Afterwards we found out that we had "stolen" him from a lady relative of his whom he was helping by accompanying her and carrying her small bundle. However, she didn't seem to mind, but just joined our group and found occupation cooking for the porters. This was a benefit for both her and them. She was of conservative high caste and therefore unable to eat at the hotels along the road. She had to cook for herself wherever she stopped. The porters appreciated someone having the food ready for them when they reached the stopping spots and therefore supplied the rice, or flour, and lentils for her food along with their own.

Because of the young porters having taken on too big loads, our trip took 7 days instead of the normal 3 days with loads. Our Nepali staff did not feel that we could

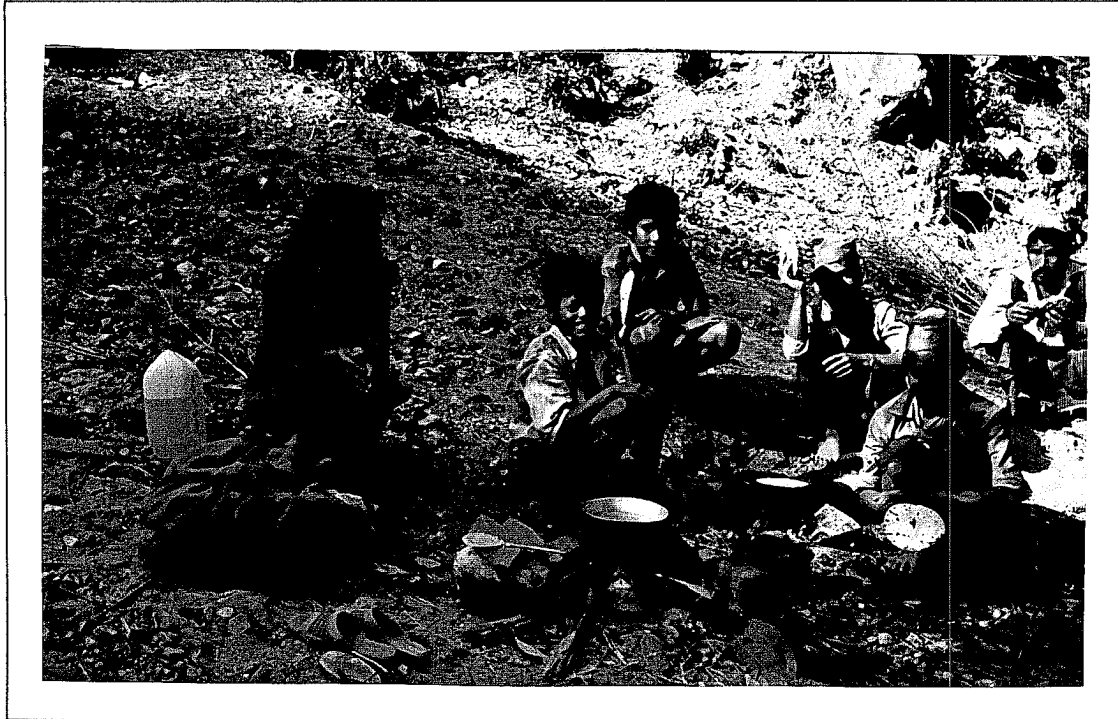


Fig. 6: The porters eating their lunch of "chapatis" (flat wheat bread).

trust the porters to be left alone with the loads, so we all walked along together. For me, it was a useful time for getting to know Bob, Bhawani and Janak.

Having left Nepalghanj on Dec 2nd, we finally arrived in Khalanga on the morning of Dec 7. For the last day's walk we had left Bhawani behind with the porters, and they came in one by one during that evening and the day after.

#### 3.1.4 December in Jajarkot.

My first couple of weeks were taken up by finding a place to live, and getting settled. In the office, I spent time reading the background material of reports and discussion papers on the project.

Soon after I arrived, we heard rumors from the class area that the female NFE Workers were having specific trouble in their villages, supposedly caused by them being women. To try to find out what was going on, I went with the secretary Menuka (for her to get a chance to see the field work) to visit the 3 villages where the women were working. It took us a bit more than the estimated 5 hours to walk; down and up a steep valley, through a deep forest clinging to the hillside and along ridges, to the upper Jagtipur area. We stayed out for a total of 4 nights, seeing one class per evening (there was a Saturday holiday in between, which we spent with the NFE Workers).

In the event, we found no more problems with the classes than what is normal to my experience. The class management committees did not really function because the people on them were "habitual politicians" rather than personally interested in progress of the classes; all had trouble raising enough money for the kerosene lanterns; and trouble to get the fees for the community development fund (mainly because participants expressed distrust towards committee leaders in managing the funds) there was a high drop-out rate (men going to India for seasonal labor and women being too busy with the farm and family work, were the main reasons); irregular attendance and lack of action in the area of practical activities (pit-latrines construction, vegetable gardening, etc., which are part of the curriculum for facilitators, committee members and participants to

complete in their own homes). None of these problems were exclusive to the classes conducted by the female workers.

I noticed in these three villages, a big difference in the attitude towards girls' schooling. All three were about the same distance from the local school, which has grades 1-7. In one of the villages most boys get to go to school for at least up to 5th grade, and a fair amount of girls also get to go for grades 1-5. In another, no girls whatsoever had ever been sent to school, and very few boys were sent to school even now. The third village fell somewhere in between the two. Typically the more school-motivated villages had higher percent Brahmin inhabitants than the others (the least motivated having no Brahmins at all).

In the village with the low school-motivation, the program had placed the NFE Worker with the most experience in community development; Bimala Shah (she had worked many years as an extension worker for UNICEF's sanitation program and is a mature woman and a mother). But the problems there were the worst, even in spite of Bimala's efforts and the people's obvious respect for her. But it was very clear that although the villagers had requested an adult literacy class (for some obscure reason), it was not really high on their list of priorities at this point in time.

Soon after our return from the village it was Christmas. Since the change in government attitude brought by the 1990 revolution, Christmas is an official UMN holiday, as well as a government holiday for those employees

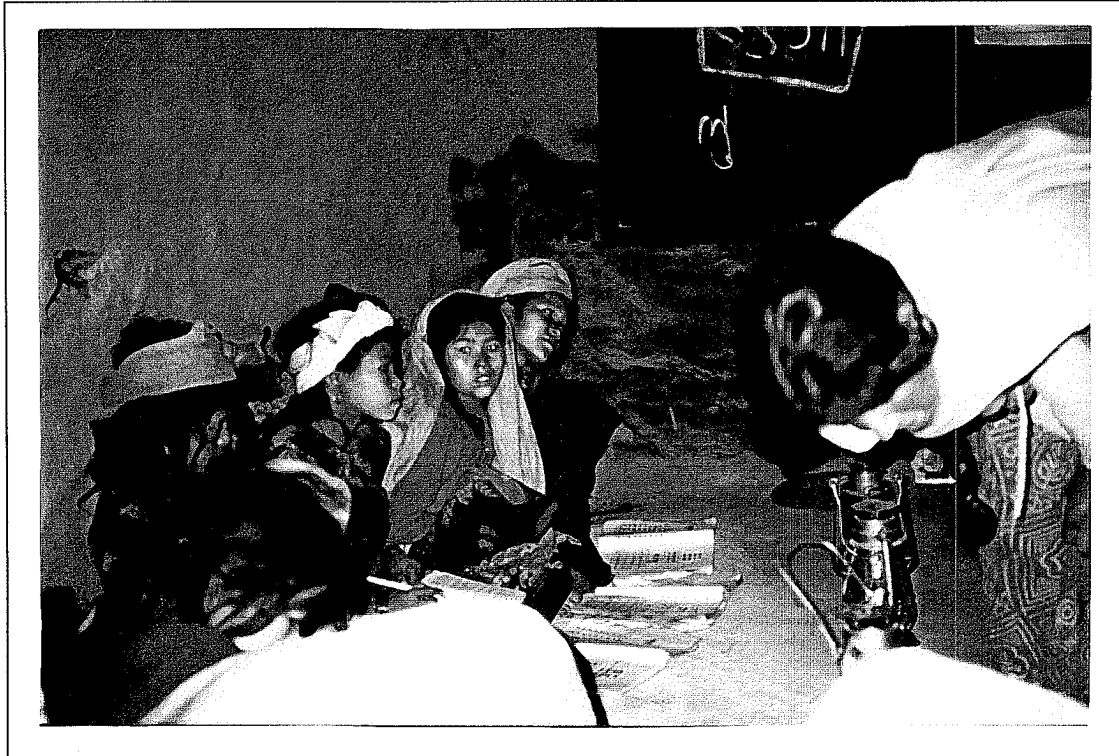


Fig. 7: NFE Worker Bimala Shah with her class of very young "adult" literacy learners.

who profess the Christian faith. Around that time I came down with a bad cold that knocked me out from work for almost two weeks.

During the week of the last days of December I got the whole office staff together to talk about evaluation planning for the project. We had two half-day sessions where I shared the ideas that I had learned from the class on Evaluation for NFE. Most of these concepts were new to all, but were met with great interest. During the two sessions, we got as far as to discuss implementing questions and indicators for results. But as far as actually plan our own evaluation strategy, that had to be postponed for future meetings.



Fig. 8: Evaluation meeting with Jajarkot Project office staff. From left: Tanja-Birgit (NFE Specialist), Bob (Project Director), Bhawani (Business Assistant), Krishna (NFE Program In-charge) and Menuka (Secretary). (Photo by Sharon Gsellman.)

#### 3.1.5 January in Jajarkot.

The planned for bi-monthly refresher training for the NFE Workers and village facilitators was overdue. It was conducted 92-01-3 to 4 (which is just after mid-Paush). The NFE program in-charge, Krishna, did most of the planning for it, and gave me a couple of sessions on literacy methodology to facilitate.

The program uses the Naya Goreto Primer series. The MOEC had recently come out with additional Facilitator's Manuals, thereby completing the whole set of four steps. However, there had been a delay in delivery, and our NFE Workers had therefore been teaching all the time without the

benefit of the manuals. In general they had done a good job of following the teaching steps they had been trained in, and also had showed some additional inventiveness and imagination. The most common

problem was that they had a hard time to remember

how to play the

different card games, and also had problems to put them into the schedule often enough. Therefore we spent some time to review these things.

Additionally I introduced some ideas from my own NG II Facilitator's Manual. These are intended to mix in some whole-language strategies as a supplement to the key-word method of the NG series. One of these supplements was to teach learners how to write their own names as an initial exercise. This I had tried with the learners in a couple of the classes that I had visited, and it was received with

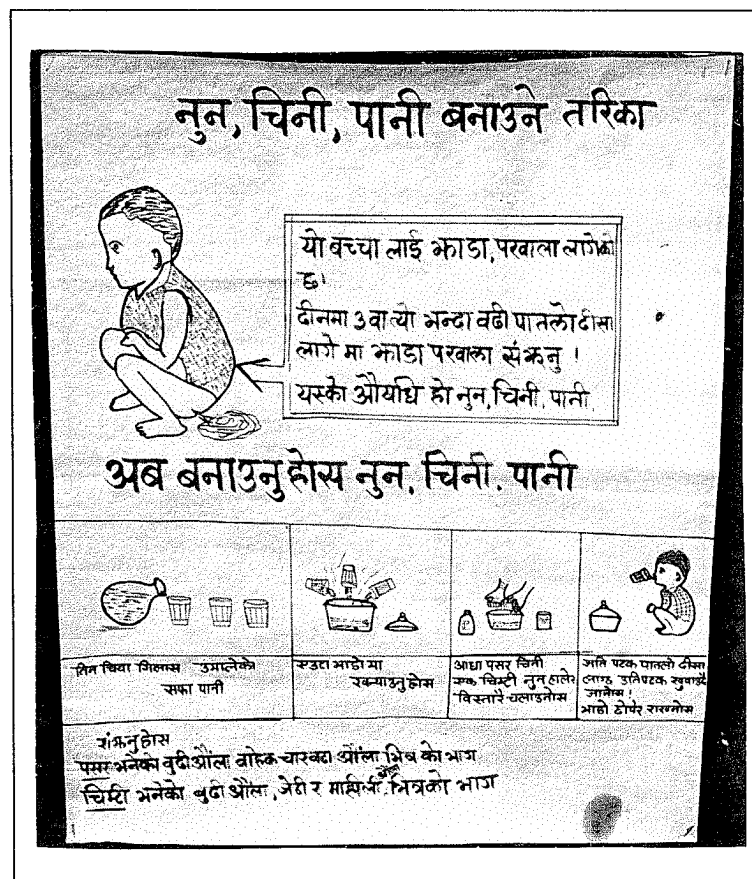


Fig. 9: A poster, made by NFE Worker Raju Raja Singh, promoting the use of home-made rehydration fluid for children with diarrhoea.

great interest. In the discussion at the training, one of the NFE Workers wondered if this would not make some people quit early, because many have as their only goal to learn to write their names? I'm sure that might sometimes happen, because it is a commonly expressed motive for coming to classes. But I feel that if, by the couple of weeks or so that it takes for them to master their names, we fail to motivate them to continue to learn more, then we might as well let them go.

One of my ideas they were already using in the classes. That is to go directly to practice writing after the introduction of the key word and new letters. This is to have an additional reinforcement for memory of having formed the letters with their hands, before they start reading new words including those letters in the book.

Another supplementary method that I introduced, was to always look first at whatever pictures there are for a story or comic strip, and have the learners predict from that what the story would be about. In this context I discussed with the trainees about the various clues that we use for reading, such as; grapho-phonemic, context, background knowledge and syntax clues (Weaver, 1988, p. 102). I found it a problem to communicate these ideas effectively (in Nepali, mind you!) even to senior staff with lots of experience and some training in the field. I think that some experiential exercises are needed, for the trainees to feel the impact of the use of those different clues.



A third activity that we introduced from my Manual, was to make schema-stories (Weaver, 1988, p. 263). We practiced both the use and the making up of schema stories with the ones in the book as raw material. For the few short stories in NG I, the NFE Workers had to make their own. For the ones in NG II, we had enlarged photocopies made in Ktm, cut them up and distributed them to the classes. We had hoped to do the same thing for the stories of NG III and IV, but that plan was never realized. (It is a problem to not have your own copy machine, mail to Ktm taking several weeks back and forth, the project's typewriter writes tiny and unintelligible letters, and finally, the stencil machine messes up anything you try to print!)

Out in the classes I had seen that the importance of learners truly working together at their reading, was not properly understood by the NFE Workers. Therefore it wasn't being really enforced in their reading activities. For that I made up an exercise of reading an English article on a subject in agro-forestry. The NFE Workers have some theoretical schooling in English language, but to really understand a reading presents a real challenge to them. The subject was somewhat new, but related to their lives as villagers, and now as rural community development extension workers. Some had to read alone and some got to work together in groups. Afterwards we discussed how it helped them to get help from each other, and we agreed on that the same was relevant for the adult literacy learners.

The majority of the training time was for supervisors' feedback from visits to the classes, and for the NFE Workers' concerns. Major problems in almost all classes were: Non-functioning management committees; high drop-out, irregular attendance; problems to get any action on the practical activities; failure to get enough money for kerosene to provide adequate light; and failure to motivate learners and committees to put in monthly fees to a class fund for future development activities of their choice. Additionally, some classes in the Kudu area were having problems with drunken people from the local bars, harassing the learners both in class and on their way home.

One problem common to all the classes was that it had not really been made clear to the local facilitators that they were expected to be in class basically all the time. The problem originates from the decision to expect them to volunteer their time for this, in the hope of getting a stipend to take on the follow-up classes on their own sometime in the future. This was something that failed to motivate any regular helping attendance. Additionally, the NFE Workers had not been specifically trained to really utilize the facilitators' presence in the class to keep them as being and feeling useful.

During the time since I had arrived in the project, I had heard on and off about the discontinued Khalanga classes. We kept hearing rumors that the learners were motivated to continue, if only a facilitator that was

acceptable to them could be found. I decided to take on the class myself, hoping to find a local facilitator to help me eventually. This would be a good chance for me to get to try out more of integrating whole-language methodology in the NG curriculum. This experience will be related in more detail in section 3.2 The Trial Class Experience.

During the first few weeks I had no facilitator to help, so I was tied to staying in Khalanga to fulfill my commitment to this class. The facilitator girl that the learners had suggested (a relative of theirs who boarded with them to study at the local campus), arrived just in time to get 4 days on-the-job training with me, before I had to leave the project area for some time.

#### 3.1.6 January in Tansen.

UMN HQ NFE Resource Office was organizing its annual seminar for senior level staff of all UMN projects involved in adult literacy. Krishna and I flew to Nepalghanj and then went one day's bus ride to the hill town of Tansen, where the seminar was hosted by the NFE Program of UMN's Palpa Community Health Project. To account for possible cancellations of flights, break down of buses, etc., we had to leave with a margin of several days, to be sure to arrive in time!

The seminar proved to be very interesting and helpful for sharing of experiences, as well as for input to the strategic planning of UMN' future efforts in the NFE field.

I was very impressed by the quality of vision, skills and commitment to improve their programs, that I found in the Nepali staff present. All projects' (except one) NFE program in-charge are now Nepali, with the expatriates, if any, being in advisory functions, like myself. Some additional details from one discussion subject of the seminar will be reported in the reflective sections.

### 3.1.7 February in Kathmandu.

After the seminar, we travelled by over-night bus from Tansen to Ktm. The NFE Resource Office had advertised on behalf of Jajarkot Project, in the national newspaper, for an Assistant NFE Program In-charge. An Assistant In-charge was needed both because of the possibility of Krishna going away for 1 ½ year's Master's degree study abroad the coming fall, as well as the needs of the planned expansion of the program next teaching season (from the first season's 10 classes to 60, in an area 8 hrs walk from our present location). We had agreed that we would look specifically to employ a woman, to help in balancing the male-female ratio among the staff. It is very important to provide role-models for women at all levels, since the literacy learners' numbers are always made up of at least 50 % women.

We found about 20 applications from men, and only 4 total from women. We interviewed all the women and a small selection of the men who seemed to have some kind of relevant experience. One of the women declined to come for

the interview when she heard that the post was indeed for placement in Jajarkot (which had been clearly mentioned in the ad). Another woman was totally inexperienced in spite of her BEd education. The two other women both had very relevant experience, so both of them, plus one of the men, were called to come and visit the project for orientation and final selection.

In the meantime (4 days after my arrival to Ktm) I had a bad attack of back pain which resulted in need for medication and intensive physiotherapy with ultra sound treatment. My departure from Ktm was therefore delayed. When I was ready to leave, I tried to get on the weekly scheduled direct flight to Chaurjhari. After 5 hours waiting at the airport I found out that it was canceled. Around that time the RNAC pilots began a gradually increasing but still partial strike.

#### 3.1.8 February in Jajarkot.

Eventually I was fortunate enough to get on two flights that connected directly from Ktm to Nepalghanj to Chaurjhari on 92-2-21. After that, there was a total stop for all remote area flights for a week (which also meant no mail). Bob Gsellman, who also had been in Ktm, missed the chance of the last flight and had to walk in. It took him 2 days from Sittalpati road-head in Salyan, where he got by one day bus, after he had been waiting around in Nepalghanj for a couple of days. The pilot strike caused one of our female

applicants to be delayed. She also walked in from Salyan, starting just the day before the flights were in the air again, and so had to see them fly over her head while she was walking!

### 3.1.9 March in Jajarkot.

With Bob came the male applicant for his project visit. He impressed both Bob and Krishna a great deal. However we agreed that he would only be the backup choice if none of the women would want to have the post. They both eventually came, delayed by the pilot strike. In the event one proved not able to put up with the arduous walking involved, and also demanded a higher level posting than what UMN rules would allow her, considering her experience.

The second woman seemed to be the best possible person for the job: Long experience in a senior officer post in the Women's Development Program of HMGN, which includes adult literacy, income generation, and all kinds of activities in community development. Although she was interested in our project, a medical condition proved to make her unfit for the physical strain of the hill walking involved.

So in spite of the goal to employ a woman, we had to call the male interviewee, hoping that he would not have changed his mind. Mr Indra Chhetri had worked several years with the Seti Project, which had a reputation of having been a comparatively successful adult literacy project, connected

to the government system in the Seti Zone. He was presently holding a school teacher post, but was on leave in his home district Syangja. Although he would have preferred a less remote posting, he accepted the job offer and came out to Jajarkot to start work in the beginning of April.

#### 3.1.10 March; The Jhapra visit.

While the first female applicant was visiting, we took her along for our first survey trip to Jhapra VDC. This was going to be the center of class activities for the next teaching season. We left Khalanga at 8 in the morning and arrived in Jhapra well after dark in the evening, picking our way with flashlights. The path was arduous, with about 5 hrs straight climbing, before descending into deep forests on the north side of the hill. It was equally steep there, just more slippery and treacherous in the dampness of the forest floor. It was the season of blooming Rhododendron (Nepal's national flower), which grows into great trees, and the hill sides were ablaze with different shades of red. Added to its brightness were the more discreet hues of pink and white fruit tree blossoms, surrounding the scattered village houses.

In Jhapra we found lodging with a village family who had one room to rent for travellers. They also had a small shop, as an additional occupation for income generation. They proved to be a good choice for getting to know the adult learning needs of the closer area. The family was

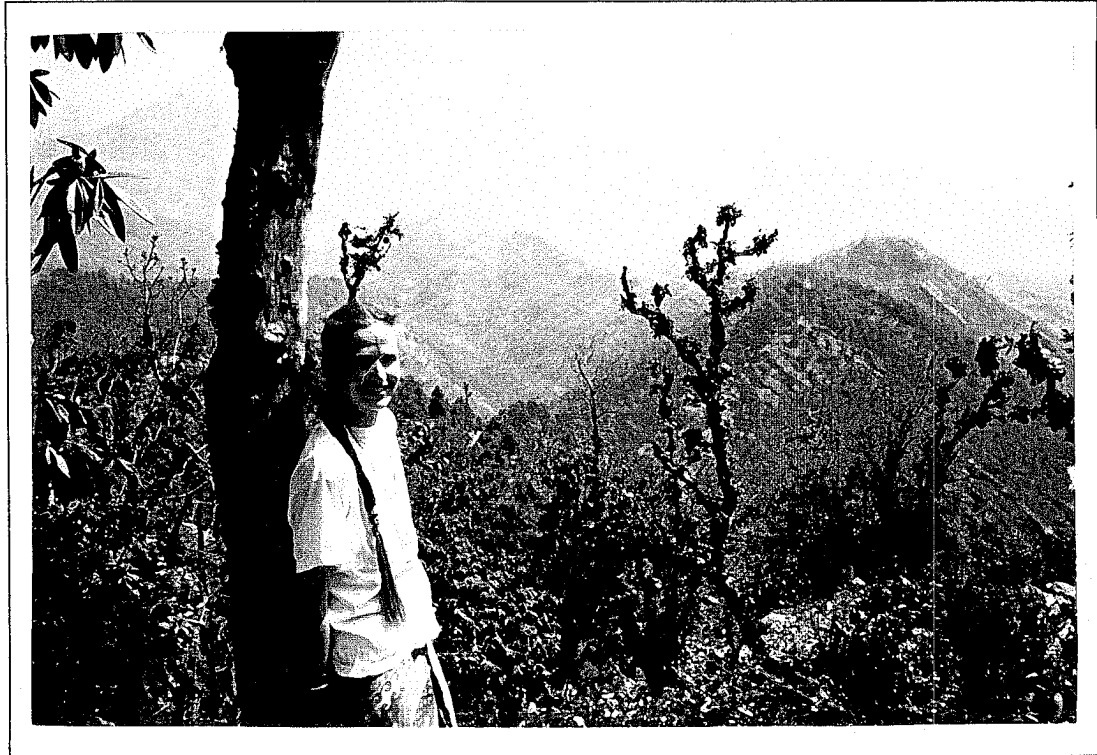


Fig. 10: On the path towards Jhapra, looking back over the steep climb that took us about 5 hours. Khalanga is on the two small hilltops in the middle of the photo. (Photo by Bob Gsellman.)

unusual in that they were attempting to educate all their daughters (there were several). One had passed SLC and was studying at the Jajarkot Campus. Another also had her SLC and was teaching in the local school, hoping to get tenure on a permanent teaching post soon. She was quite old to be unmarried in this culture. When we asked about it, her mother said that no men wanted educated wives since they "would be no good for the farm work". With this kind of understanding of what education is for, it is not surprising that village girls are not sent to school!

The teacher-daughter of our hosts had also taught a women's adult literacy class one winter. We talked to several of the neighboring women who had been participants.



They all agreed that it had been a great thing and that it is important for them to get the chance to learn to read and write. But when we probed a bit further, we found out that the majority of married women who enrolled, had not been able to keep up their involvement in the class. This was because of problems to get away from their children and household chores for the evening classes. When suggested they try to have the class in the day time, they all said that is impossible, because everybody goes away to the fields at different times in the day.

We spent one day looking around the central Jhapra area, mainly to see if there would be any houses suitable for renting for office space and staff housing. The main problem is to find a room big enough to be training hall for 20-30 people. But then we don't have satisfactory space for that even in Khalanga. We saw a couple of empty houses that could possibly be suitable.

The area had villages with very scattered houses, which is a real problem for evening classes, especially for women learners. It probably also affects the possibility of groups working on community development projects together. People that we talked to were eager to get the project to move into the area with the class activities. But they did give me the feeling that they showed interest in the classes just because they knew that is what we have to offer, but hoping that some other benefits would come along eventually. It is very hard to find out people's own felt needs when you



Fig. 11: Scattered houses and agricultural terraces in Jhapra. In the foreground; trees lopped for fodder and firewood.

are forced (because of the government agreement) to come in with a fairly set agenda on what the project is supposed to do.

Geographically, Jhapra is located on a northern slope towards a small rainfed river that runs from east to west and eventually joins the Bheri. There is quite some forest left in the area, and year-round flowing springs seem to be available close to the villages. Obviously these two factors are related, and without concerted conservation efforts, the near future will surely see the increasing population growth cause deforestation, which in its turn will cause the springs to dry up; a familiar pattern in Nepal's hilly areas.

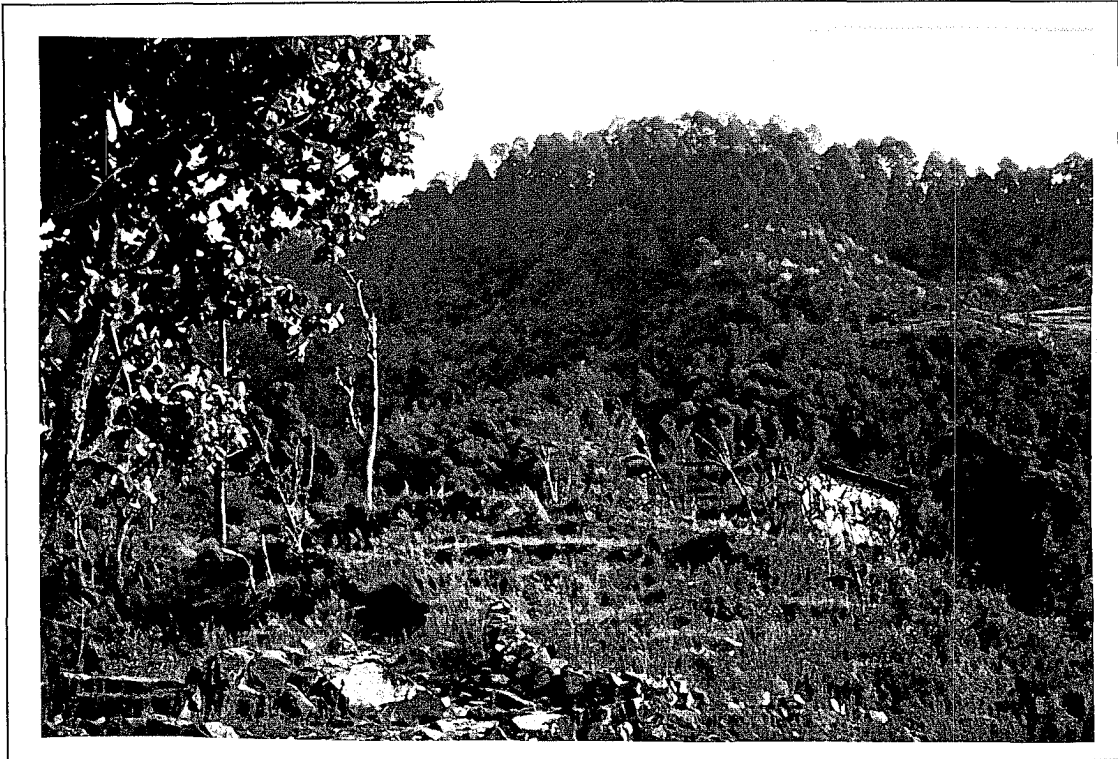


Fig. 12: The hills above Jhapra are still well covered with forest, which feeds the springs for drinking water and irrigation.

The two neighboring VDC's are Bhur and Karkigaun, where classes will also be offered during the next season. For this trip we did not take time to visit those other two areas, having been told that it was several hours walk through forested wilderness to the closest village in the next VDC.

The return walk to Khalanga took us 9 ½ hrs, including an hour lunch break at the pass on the top of the hill. We had been told that good walkers can do this trip in 8, maybe down to 5 hrs. If that is true, they must be walking very hard indeed! The major concern for the walk is that so much of it goes through forested and uninhabited areas, where

both robbers and wild animals pose possible dangers for the lonely traveler. This might prove a problem for our future plans of expanding the work with Jhapra as center, especially for our staff carrying money and supplies out to the field workers.

While we were in Jhapra, the business assistant had gone to Nepalghanj to help load a charter to fly in the books and other equipment for next season's classes. The supplies had been sent there by truck from Ktm. Although a charter is more expensive than mule train, it had been chosen for reasons of simplicity and safety. However, through a series of miscommunications and other problems, all the sacks of books, office equipment, and some personal goods, spent the night unguarded out on the Chaurjhari Airport runway! Amazingly, nothing seemed to have been stolen or damaged. But maybe mule train accompanied by one of our staff would have been safer after all!

At this time, Krishna Neupane left for a six week English language intensive in Ktm to prepare for the necessary exams for his application for study abroad. It meant that I had to take over the actual program in-charge work, for the rest of my time in the project.

### 3.1.11 March; UMN HQ Visitors in Jajarkot & Kudu Villages.

In mid-March we were visited by the Assistant Education Secretary Henk Chevalking, Education Office Jajarkot Liaison Mr Murari, outgoing UMN Personnel Secretary Graeme Guger

and Kath White who works with NFE Book Project, all from UMN HQ. Their visit caused a very intensive week, with many meetings for planning and strategy discussions.

We found out that Kath White had agreed to take on the acting project director post for most of the time that Bob Gsellman was going to be away for home leave (coinciding with my own absence from the project, as well as partly with Krishna's). She had been one of the major visionaries behind

the planning of the Jajarkot project, so we all felt that she was the best person possible to have some more influence at this crucial time.

For the last day (a Sunday) of their visit, I brought the HQ people to see some of the classes in Jagtipur. We went to the lower area, Kudu, where many of the classes are

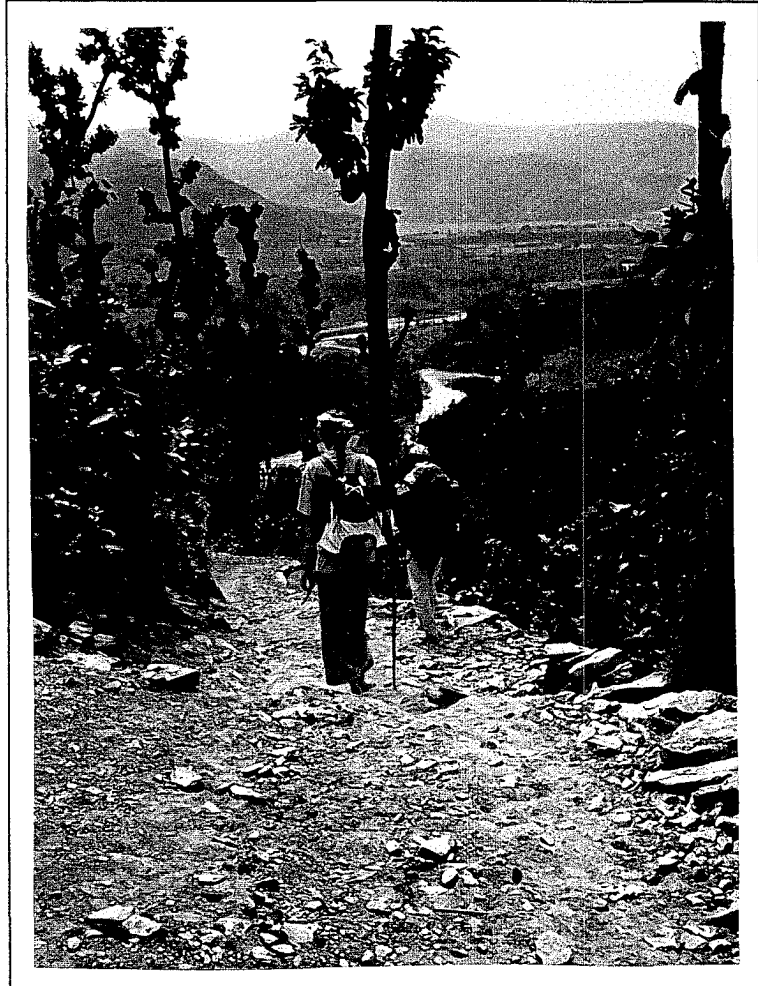


Fig. 13: The walk from Khalanga to Kudu takes 2-5 hours. (Photo by Kath White.)

quite close to each other. In that way the visitors were able to see several classes in one evening, before Monday when we sent them over the river in a dug-out canoe ferry to Chaurjhari, to catch the direct flight to Ktm. I stayed on in Kudu to visit every class for a whole evening each. During Monday we watched the airport across the river and realized that the Ktm flight had been canceled. Fortunately for our visitors, something as extraordinary as a replacement flight happened already the next day, so they did not have to walk out!

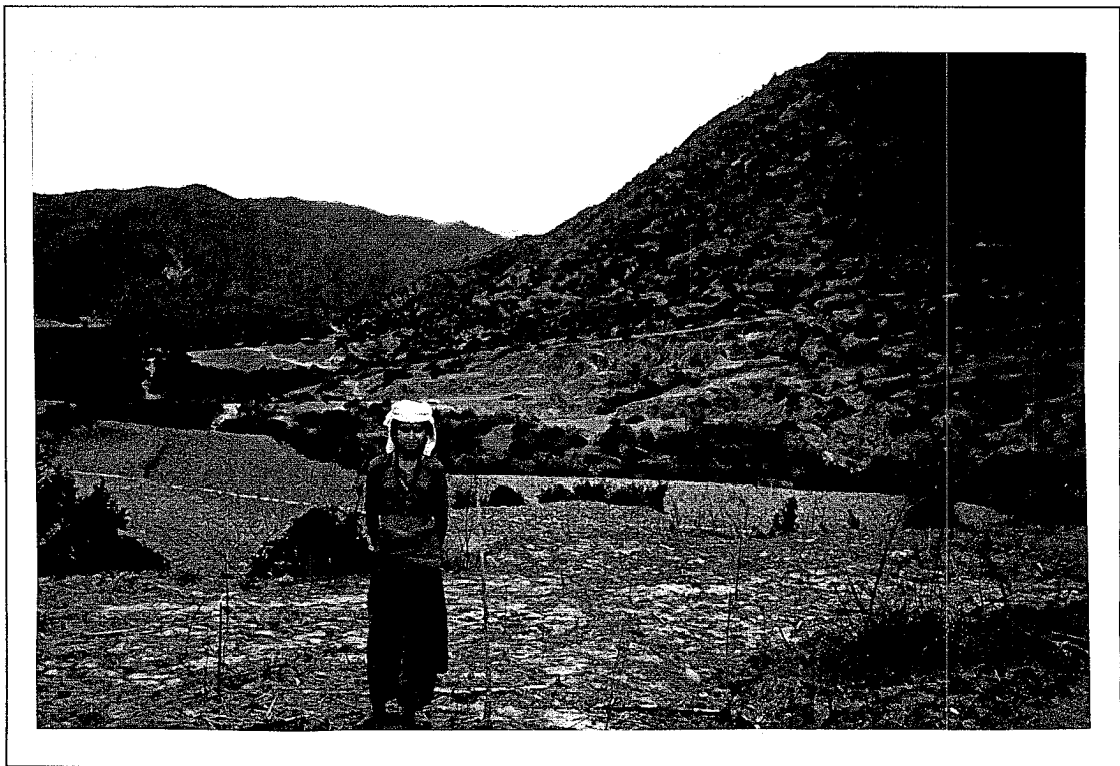


Fig. 14: A Kudu woman posing in front of a deforested and eroded hillside.

Kudu is located on a river sediment flat area just above the Bheri river. The soil is good but there is no irrigation. The hill slopes above are south facing, dry and deforested with no springs. The people get their drinking

water mainly from the river. Several of the villages also have piped drinking water systems installed by the government, but they were mostly in various states of disrepair and very unreliable, and also did not have enough flow for the needs of the users.

Kudu has a government health post that actually has a trained Health Assistant resident. Unfortunately the health post is a poor example of environmental hygiene, lacking latrine facilities even for the staff. When health workers do not live as they (are supposed to) teach, their teaching has little impact in changing villagers attitudes and behavior.

Being close to the district HQ and the airport, Kudu has received more than their fair share of attention from development branches of the HMG. Unfortunately this seems to have fostered more than usual of the "do-it-for-us" attitude, rather than any increase in self-reliant action. It can only be hoped that our literacy classes will help to create some more helpful attitudes, for the Red Cross Society workers to build on, when they start work in this area in the coming year.

The five classes varied a lot in attendance, male/female ratio, practical activities achievements, activeness of the local facilitator, etc. In a couple of classes I could see clearly the few women participants being definitely at a disadvantage from being in a gender mixed class. Yet in another one, a mixture of older men and



Fig. 15: NFE Worker Ramesh Singh with his class of 10 women learners.

younger women worked very well together, with no obvious negative teasing or hindering shyness. In one village, the lack of involvement from the committee members clearly had a negative effect on accomplishments of practical activities.

On Friday morning, after having spent 5 nights in as many different villages of Kudu, I started back towards Khalanga at about 6 in the morning and reached there at 8:35 Am.

#### 3.1.12 April in Jajarkot and Upper Jagtipur Villages.

After about one week of dealing with work in the office, I went for my second trip to upper Jagtipur. This time I met with all five classes in that area, starting out in Kattigaun. This is a village with only low caste people. The NFE Worker assigned there is himself of the same caste.



His example of having attained an education had become a great encouragement for the people in this village. Formerly no children from this village were sent to school, but seeing one of their own kind succeed in education had encouraged several families to start sending their children to primary school.

This NFE Worker is a good example to the villagers in many ways. In spite of having passed SLC and now having a development office employment, he doesn't shun manual labor. He built the latrine for the house where he rents a room, constructed his own smokeless wood stove as well as the extension room itself that he uses for a kitchen, makes bamboo baskets (a traditional skill that for some reason seems to be very rare in this area of Jajarkot), and gets involved in all kinds of work in the village. Together with the villagers he cleaned up one of the water tap areas and arranged it with flat stones to wash clothes on and to keep the area from getting muddy. Many kitchen gardens had been started, maybe partly because there is no shortage of water in this village.

In Kattigaun all the participants were men, and only 7 remained after many had taken off for India to earn money as seasonal labor. Talking to the men about that they should let their wives participate also, brought forth only ridicule at the thought that they should study together with their wives! None of the participants or any other villagers, had gotten around to construct latrines after the

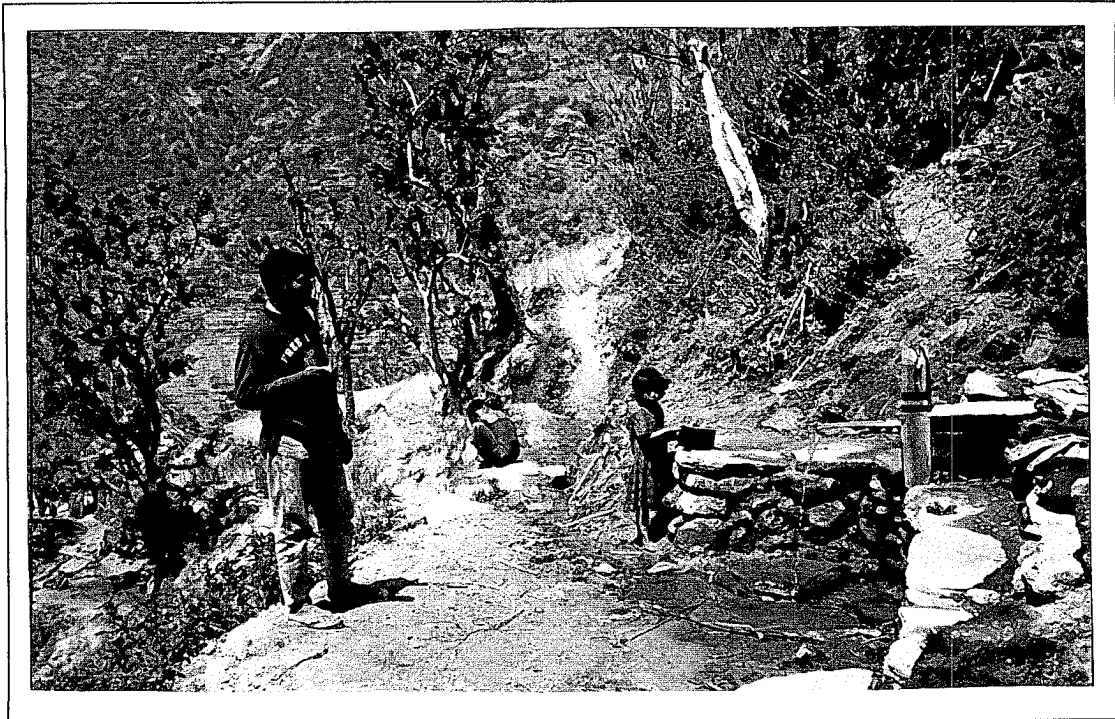


Fig. 16: NFE Worker Kali Bahadur Nepali by the improved tap-stand that he and the learners in Kattigaun built.

NFE Worker's example. One problem is that most men of low caste spend the winter days as skilled labor for others in house building work, to earn enough money to supplement their limited farm production. They certainly have the building skills to construct their own latrines, but often cannot afford the time needed. In higher caste villages the problem is the opposite: They don't have the skills themselves and complain that they cannot afford to pay the masons needed to construct a pukka enough latrine!

Another day and night I spent in Mathi Bahun Gaun, a totally different village. Here the majority of the people are Brahmins. There is a comparatively high proportion girls sent to school from here. I asked the local headmaster (who was a person from the Terai lowlands; this

is common among school personnel) of the class 1-7 school, about the reason for this unusual situation. His answer was that the couple of teachers who were from the local village served as encouragement for people to educate their children. The school had also had a female teacher for some time, and that had been an important role model for girls to study. He also felt that the village was situated on a major cross road and therefore receiving many high level visitors, which serves as encouragement for all kinds of progressiveness. Additionally, it is my own experience that it is common for the Brahmins to be ahead of other



Fig. 17: A young girl from Tallo Bahun Gaun who has no time to go to school. Here she carries water home from the spring, 15 min below her village.

castes in recognizing the importance of education for both boys and girls. However, the final important factor to notice is that the village seemed fairly prosperous and therefore better could afford having children in school, rather than working.

During this trip I also visited again the three villages where the female NFE Workers were posted. In Rawalgaun the class had lost its meeting room and were gathering on a roof top. Certainly quite spacious, but cold and windy. They knew they would have to find another solution before the onset of spring rains. Here I heard that the majority of young girl participants had been harassing the few male ones and caused them to drop out of class.

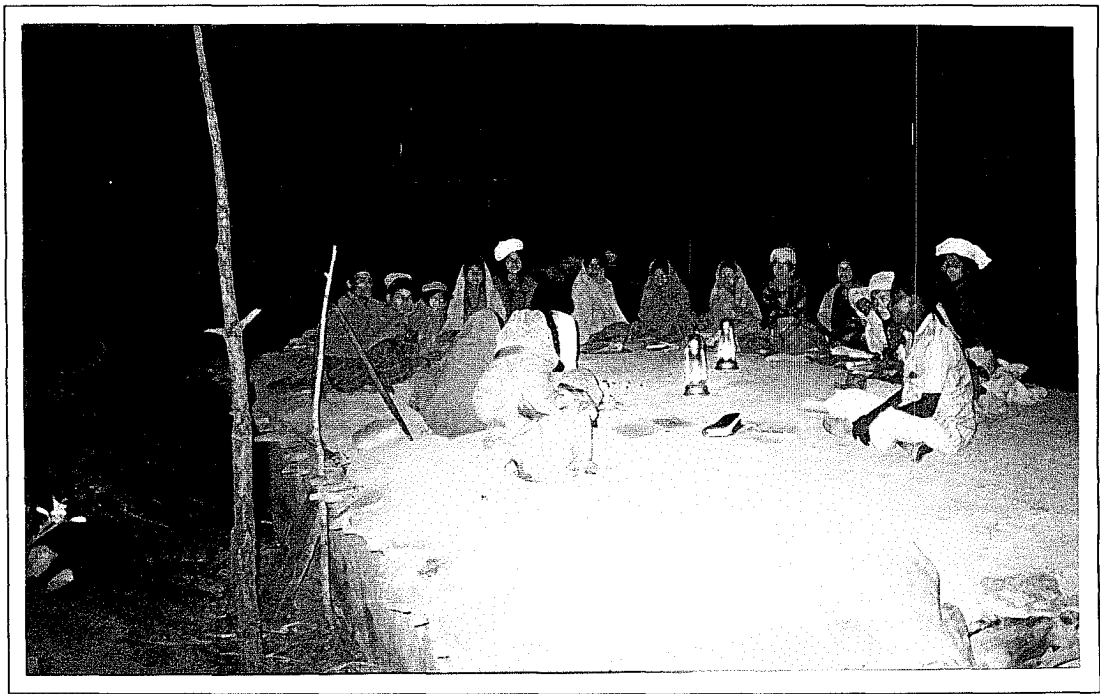


Fig. 18: The Rawalgaun class meeting on a rooftop for lack of any other space.

Contrastingly, in both Tallo Bahun Gaun and Amanigaun, the classes worked fairly well, even with one having 2 men among all the others being women, and the other one being mixed 50/50 men and women. I cannot find a clear reason to why mixed gender classes sometimes works and sometimes doesn't at all. However, in all gender mixed classes the facilitators have trouble to conduct in-depth discussions about sensitive but important issues, because of shyness between women and men.

For this visit I had brought along the trial New Reader Booklets to test. In one class an interesting incident happened. One of the books is about a woman who gets



Fig. 19: Young learners in Mathi Bahun Gaun eagerly read one of the trial booklets.

married off to this nice young man and they live happily together, except for one thing. Whenever he asks his wife to do something, the man has the habit of adding:

"Otherwise..." This sounds threatening in the young wife's ears, and she wonders what it is that he would do to her, "otherwise..."? At a visit to her mother's home, she shares her fears. Her mother answers that, the next time he says that to you, just ask him: "Otherwise what would you do"? And when the young wife acts on her mother's advice, her husband just looks sheepish and says: "Otherwise I'll just have to do without".

This story was a great favorite with all learners. But in one class a group of men, who were trying to read the story together, used their own background "knowledge" in a way that caused a mistake. They read that the mother said to the daughter: "He is your husband, so he has the right to threaten and even beat you. You just have to put up with it"! This is a very good example of how reading is more than decoding text! There was nothing in there that could have been mistaken to mean what they read, they just drew their own conclusions from their own ideas about marital relationships. Notably, no women learners did ever read the story that way (although wife abuse is a common reality in this area). I'm glad that I happened to hear what they read and could recommend them to look at the writing again!

The return walk to Khalanga took 3 hours this time. I took a different route, descending through forest down to

the bridge over Bheri, and then climbing up the main path that comes from the airport to Khalanga town.

In the second week of April, Indra Chhetri arrived to start his work as Assistant NFE Program In-charge. After a few days of orientation in the office, we sent him out for a field trip to visit all the 10 classes. He was instructed to take note of his observations of the classes, to be discussed at the time of the next refresher training.

### 3.1.13 April; The "Problem" of Politics in a New Democracy.

In mid-April, Indra and I conducted another refresher training with the NFE Workers and village facilitators. One of the major concerns brought from the classes was that political discussions were causing trouble! At this time the political parties were stepping up their campaigns for the upcoming elections for local and district level governing bodies. The idea of democracy is so new to people, and it seems impossible to discuss it in general without being seen as taking sides with specific parties. Already there had been national action taken, prohibiting school teachers from being actively involved in party work! This was supposedly preceded by some teachers having misused their positions to influence students. Clearly this situation calls for extraordinary carefulness from our workers, especially since they are employed by a foreign organization.

However, it is very unfortunate that non-party related political discussions cannot be done in the classes at this point. I see the adult education programs as one of the key elements to teach people what democracy really is and how they should judge a party and its representatives to know how to cast their votes. But at this time any such suggestions meet with the word "impossible", from all our staff. In some classes, they had trouble keeping their participants from getting into real fights over party issues!

On April 26 the election campaign brought the Prime Minister G.P. Koirala for a brief visit to Khalanga. Rumors had said some women MPs would be in his entourage for this tour. Since there are only 7 female MPs (!), I was hoping that a friend of mine, who is one of them from the ruling Congress party, would be in the group. But no such luck, the rumor proved totally false and no women came along. It was interesting to see the commotion of the people who had gathered from all over the district to welcome the PM (and to see the helicopter land on the hill top by the CDO's office!)

The opposition parties had also taken advantage of the political freedom, and their supporters had painted all kinds of slogans, most of them rather abusive, on the walls of the houses along the PM's path down to the public meeting stage. I was distressed to hear the local Congress MP in his speech urge Congress sympathizers to go out and respond



with writing similar abusive slogans about the opposition. I thought I saw the PM wince at this. Being an old time democracy fighter who had spent much of his adult life in prison under the previous un-democratic regime, Mr Koirala had a much more constructive response to the abuses thrown at him: "I urge those who write on walls to lay down the paint and take up the tools for participating in working for our country. If they have complaints, there is freedom to express them and discuss any problem in a constructive way."

#### 3.1.14 April; NFE Workers to Pokhara Seminar.

During the spring, the opposition parties had stepped up a campaign of increasing violent and disturbing action, such as strikes and burning of government vehicles. This caused considerable trouble for a UMN-wide seminar planned to be held in Pokhara for facilitators from all projects. We found out in the last minute that our planned travel day was one when all the buses were announced to be on strike. We had to get the NFE Workers together on very short notice and send them off walking to Sittalpati, one day earlier than planned. That very day the first spring storm with thunder and rain blew up and probably drenched them on the path! At the same time we sent a telegram to the liaison in Nepalghanj to change the tickets that he had been asked to book for the group and meet them with at Lamahi. There was no way we could know for sure if the telegram reached him in time or not. To try to travel on buses with a group of ten

people without seats booked in beforehand is a very unsure business.

In the event we got word that everything had gone according to plans and the group had reached Pokhara safely. I had planned to travel with them and be part of the seminar, co-facilitating a session together with my former Nepali counterparts from Andhikhola Project. But at the time that our group was departing, my back was troubling me and I did not dare to subject it to the long bus ride involved. Instead I hoped to fly to Ktm and then back to Pokhara the same day, missing only one day of the week long seminar.

#### 3.1.15 April and May in Jajarkot; Screening of Applications for new NFE Workers.

The last week before leaving the project, I spent looking through several hundred applications for the 10 new posts for NFE Workers that we had advertised. We had decided to lower the required qualification level to 10th class pass only (the SLC is a separate national standardized exam, taken after one has passed 10th class), in the hope to be able to get more women applicants. Of course this also attracted an increase in male applicants, who also needed to be looked through fairly. It is very hard to really find out from application forms what a person will be like in this kind of work. Still it is not possible to interview

hundreds of people, so you just have to use the forms for the first screening.

The factors that we looked for in someone to call for an interview were: Being a woman (i.e. we decided to interview all the women); any experience in NFE or other rural development activities; evidence of self-motivated social activism; Karnali Technical School graduate (this is a joint UMN/HMGN program in the neighboring district giving a 4 year training for extension workers in Construction, Agriculture/Forestry, and Health); and responses to the application form questions that sounded original and interesting.

Definitely disqualifying were the all too common "buttering up" comments about how wonderful they thought UMN's work was and how interested they were in finding out about our religion! Not that we don't want to share about Christ as the way to God. He is our motivation for seeking to serve and help people to help themselves. And any genuine concern for people includes wanting to share with them that which you have found to be the most valuable thing for your own life. But interest in religion expressed in the context of job seeking, is almost always not genuine, but rather manipulative and scheming.

#### 3.1.16 May in Jajarkot (Trying to Leave!)

Leaving for Pokhara seminar also meant packing up to leave the project to return to Sweden on June 1st. Monday

May 4th I left for the airport. As we were getting close, a spring rain storm blew up and we were soaked during the last few minutes walk. Waiting anxiously in the departure hall, we soon heard the inevitable: "Flight to Ktm canceled because of bad weather. Passengers arriving from Ktm will come via the Nepalghanj flight". Since we were expecting the UMN Executive Director Ed Metzler and his Assistant Anna-Karin Eriksson (who is from the same town as I in Sweden), I consoled myself with that I would get to spend the week with them, before getting a second chance on next week's flight (my one chance to reach the Pokhara seminar in time was gone). The flight from Nepalghanj arrived, but no visitors showed up for us.

So we just walked back up to Jajarkot again and wondered when we would get a telegram explaining what had happened to our visitors. Telegrams are expected to take a minimum of 24 hrs to reach their destination, but it commonly takes 48 hrs or more! It was dark when we approached Khalanga. Suddenly we saw the lights in the bazaar come on. This was a real welcome surprise, since the electricity had been off for half a month, and had been predicted to stay off for the rest of the time until the monsoon in June, because the hydro power water had been diverted for irrigation purposes!

Reaching the bazaar, rumors said the electricity would be on for a couple of weeks. Based on that, I spent the whole next day typing away on this Master's Project, in the

hope that I would be able to charge the computer batteries in the evening. But the evening came and no electricity, and not the next or the next or the next day either. I had taken my 12 volt solar system adapter with me in my luggage to have it checked in Ktm, and that suitcase was left in storage in a hotel at the airport! There I was with extra time on my hands to write and no way of getting my computer charged to be able to do the writing!

Anna-Karin and Ed finally arrived on Saturday so I got to spend two days with them and be part of some of the discussions about the situation for our project, which was very useful. On Monday May 11th I went down to the airport again for the Ktm flight. It was delayed coming in, and just barely made it out of the valley before another thunder storm, but they did get us safely (even if very bumpily) to Ktm.

### 3.1.17 May in Kathmandu.

During the time in Ktm I was able to take part in the preparations for the employment of a second Assistant NFE program in-charge. It had been decided that a second person was needed, both because it seemed sure that Krishna would be leaving for his training abroad, and also because the job of setting up a sub-center in Jhapra and organizing classes

there, would be a major task requiring more of a team effort.<sup>4</sup>

After discussing with a number of people versed in policy rules, etc., we found out that there was indeed a way to advertise for women only for a certain job. It was simply to make the job description as requiring a woman. We had no trouble doing that, since the importance of having female role models for village women and for other staff, is very obvious in an adult education program. My feeling was that advertising specifically for a woman would encourage more of them to apply. Seeing a general advertisement, many of those women would think it no use to try to compete against a large number of men. During the last few months, I have heard from Nepal that this time they were successful and that a woman has been employed to work together with Indra.

I left Ktm and Nepal on June 1st to fly to Sweden to get married. In July we came to the US to finish our respective Master's Projects. Our plan is to return together to Nepal and Jajarkot NFE Project, in January 93.

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<sup>4</sup>For additional information on the plans for the project's staffing structure, see Appendix E, and for the plans for organization of community development to follow the literacy classes, see Appendix F.

### 3.2 The Trial Class Experience.

#### 3.2.1 How it started.

As mentioned in the Diary above, I had found out about the classes that had been forced to discontinue after having been the practice objects for the NFE Worker training, and decided to take on one of them myself, for the purpose of testing new methodology ideas.

The NFE Workers helped me identify a leader among the women who had been in one of the classes. She was very happy to hear that the class would be able to start again, and promised to get other women together who wanted to continue. She felt sure that at least 20 would want to participate. In the event no more than a total of 12 were ever on the roll. It was agreed that a minimum daily average of 10 learners was needed to keep the class going.

The participants were all low caste women, and lived close to the office and my own quarters. They themselves suggested a local helper, someone who would come to board with them within the next two weeks. Parbati Nepali is a young relative of the leading participants, who had gotten through high school by her own efforts and now was about to start studying at the local campus. The project would pay her a facilitator's stipend for helping with the class.

### 3.2.2 Community Background of the Participants.

These women are the most disadvantaged of all people in this area. As bazaar living low caste, most of their families are nearly or totally landless and they have to depend on daily labor, skilled or unskilled, for their survival. In the setting of rates for remuneration, they are at the mercy of the high caste people who buy their labor. Many occupational caste families have generations old bonded relationships to high caste families in a feudal type of system (for details, see section 2.3, page 7).

Some of the women are tailors, a skill practiced by both men and women in the Damai caste. Others belong to the blacksmith caste Kami, where only the men practice the caste trade. Those women who have no special skill to sell, work as farm laborers, carry stones and mud for construction sites, do interior maintenance mud plastering of homes and public buildings, etc., according to what jobs are available.

Almost all of the low caste families' poverty is aggravated by excessive drinking and smoking. Women are routinely beaten and mistreated by their drunk husbands (these problems are very much present in many higher caste families too). Many of the women also drink and ruin their small income and the health of themselves and their children. Drunk men cause quarrels and fights and disturb any attempts to community organization and action.



The nutritional situation of the women and their families seemed unsatisfactory. They appeared to be continuously affected by diseases related to low resistance due to vitamin deficiency, such as colds, flu, skin infections, complications to measles, etc. There is almost no kitchen gardening done in the community. The reasons reported were mainly the roaming chickens, goats and cows. This is a problem in the whole of Khalanga bazaar, and only those who can afford to build proper walls can manage to raise vegetables (although walls do not keep chickens out). Another reason was told to be lack of water. Seeing the continuous flow of waste water from the tap in their area, I questioned this reason. I was told that one family had raised vegetables by using the waste water. But jealous neighbors had reported them to the Water Office, accusing them of diverting the tap directly to their garden. The Water Office responded by prohibiting the garden. This is totally ironic, since most taps in high caste areas are used regularly by the powerful to irrigate gardens directly, while other users have to wait in line to be able to fill even their drinking water containers!

The motivation for education seemed low in this community. In spite of close proximity to fairly good quality schools, only some of the boys and very few girls are sent to school. There are few who complete schooling up to SLC. In the search for a female facilitator to help in the class, I heard of no SLC graduated women and only one

10th class graduate woman in this community. The campus student, who became the facilitator, comes from a village some hours walk away, where she is the only educated girl from her caste, and has persisted in school against her parents opposition, with the help of scholarships and money earned by her own work.

The men in the community (of whom only a few are minimally educated) are ambiguous in their attitude towards their women's need for literacy. Most tell us that of course they will send their wives and daughters to class and of course it is very important to them. But in reality very few really make it consistently possible for the women to attend. Our most regular attending participant was a woman who had left her husband and now lived with her younger brother and one school age son. But even she suffered from occasional beatings, by her brother (!), who would sometimes try to stop her from going to class!

Being situated in the district headquarter town, this community had been the target of many different "development attempts", none of which seem to have succeeded in affecting any lasting change for improving its quality of life. The only visible result is a drinking water tap that has round the clock continuous flow (in difference from most of the other taps in the bazaar, which are on schedules). I was told that before their own tap was installed, the low caste people were discriminated and harassed when going to any of the other taps in the bazaar. It was also said that the

cement given by the government Water Office to construct the wash area around the tap, had been appropriated by a powerful person and redirected to some other purpose according to his choice. As a result, the area around their tap is muddy and impossible to keep clean.

There were many other complaints of recurring discrimination because of caste. It should be noted that according to Nepali law, it is a crime to discriminate on the basis of caste, but not illegal to uphold caste, and which is considered what of the two, depends on the observer's bias. An example question: Caste rules state that a low caste person touching drinking water to be used by a high caste person, will cause that water to be defiled and therefore un-drinkable. If low caste people are forced to wait until last before getting their turn at the taps, are they being discriminated against or is this only to uphold caste?

Other complaints about discrimination concerned children in school being failed without reason. Others were about high handedness from government offices. One man told me that he had worked on a contract with the Electricity Office to do pole maintenance. Although the contract was completed according to what was agreed, the office reportedly just decided not to pay him. There was nothing he could do to get his right, he felt, so he just did not pay his electricity bill. In retaliation, the Electricity Office turned the power off for the whole area in which this

man's house was situated. Only low caste people were affected, no one with the power to raise a complaint.

You could often hear people complaining about how dirty these low caste people and their surroundings are. Indeed, the path that I had to walk down to their class meeting place was totally disgusting, filled with thrash and human excrements. However, I found out that the main blame for that was due to a food place above the path. This food stall, owned by a Brahmin family, had no latrine, like most such businesses. So the owner directed his clients, and his own children, to the path below that goes down through the low caste village, to be used as "latrine"!

When I discussed these complaints with some of our higher caste staff, I was told that I shouldn't believe these stories. Surely I was only getting one side of it. We also did have some personal experience of at least one of my class participants being prone to lying (we heard her tell things about us that were neither true nor possibly the fruit of misunderstanding). However, I do feel that even if only a fraction of truth remains about the discrimination that these low caste people reported they are facing, they are truly oppressed, and cannot be solely at blame for their lack of progress as a community (which is otherwise the most common view taken here by those more fortunate of birth and wealth).

### 3.2.3 Class organization.

In the class that was run during the NFE Worker training, the women had been unhappy about the mixture of age groups among the participants. The older women claimed that the young girls, who learn faster, tease and make fun of the older ones, who need more drilling. Therefore they requested that no unmarried or under age 18 girls would be allowed to participate. I agreed to that, provided that they would be able to keep the daily attendance average to a minimum of 10. We did get a lot of complaints from the young girls and their parents for this policy.

After a short time it became clear that the older women alone could not keep the numbers up, so we agreed to take in younger girls who were serious about participating. In spite of the eagerness they had exhibited while excluded from the class, they were as irregular in their attendance as the older women. Except for drunk husbands and responsibility for own children (they probably had trouble with drunk fathers and brothers, and with care of younger siblings instead!), they had the same problems, with heavy work loads and late working hours, as the older women.

The relationships between the different age groups in the class, worked fairly well, although all of the participants, irrespective of age, liked to tease each other for any mistakes made. And all were equally uncomfortable when being the target for such teasing. We had many

discussions about this problem, but they were never able to stop this habit, despite everybody disliking it.

The class decided to meet in an upper room belonging to one of the participants, a widowed tailor lady, whose house had electric lights. The room was a bit small for when all were present, but nothing worse than most of what the village classes have to suffer. During the times that I was away, they had trouble with drunk men disturbing the class. At several other times we were interrupted by commotions from outside and the participants drawn into the fry of neighborhood quarrels. Eventually the class also suffered from the power outage caused by the conflict with the electricity office (mentioned above), and had to raise money for kerosene to burn lantern lights.

The Project office with its large training room and electric lights (as reliable as the power supply is for the area in general!), is just two more minutes walk up the hill. Some of the women suggested that we try to meet there instead. All agreed to give it a try, although several of them had misgivings that the difference made it "to far and dangerous a path in the evenings", as well as too far to hear if their children would cry. I ended up having to accompany one of the girls half way to her home every evening, after she supposedly had been accosted by a drunk man, and her parents refused to let her walk alone anymore. Although the distances to the office or to the tailor's house were the same for me, it was a relief for my back and

neck, to be in the office, since the first meeting place had a ceiling so low I couldn't stand upright in there!

After a while, another woman who was not from the same community asked to join the class, and was accepted by the others. She was the wife of a local civil servant of Chhetri caste (third caste after Brahmins and Thakuris). Her life was not much better than the low caste women's, because her husband spent most of his salary on drinking and used to beat her regularly. In spite of that she managed to attend the class fairly regularly, although she had to bring her two young boys with her most of the time.

In the same area of town as the Chhetri woman, lived an American Peace Corps worker. He had a young orphan boy for household worker, whom he was trying to help by encouraging him to learn to read and write. When he heard about our class, he asked that the boy (about 17 years old) would be allowed to join us. This was hard for the women, they did not really want any males in the class. But after long discussions about it, seeing that they still had trouble keeping their attendance up to the required average, they agreed to let him participate.

Kali Bahadur became a great resource to the class. At the time when he joined us, he was able to recognize most letters. But typical for someone who has been mostly learning by himself, he could not understand what he read when he joined letters together to words. The other participants knew few letters in the alphabet, but the ones

they knew, they could use for meaningful reading and writing. He also had trouble with the "joint" letters of the Nepali script.<sup>5</sup> After it was made clear to him that he had to be humble and helpful with whatever he knew better than the others, he became a very good helper and learned a lot himself in the process. Thanks to the mixed-in whole-language activities (which will be described more in detail in the section ahead) he was able to continue to develop his own skills, which were far ahead of the others, while still helping them as well.

#### 3.2.4 Class process:

##### 3.2.4.1 The Start.

From the beginning I decided to not push for any extracurricular practical activities, unless they would come up as suggestions from the participants. The reason was mainly for lack of time on my part to invest in this community, outside of class hours (I still had to be involved in supervision of the village classes in Jagtipur VDC). But it also had to do with some doubt about the ways in which we were pushing practical activities on the classes in the villages.

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<sup>5</sup> Nepali is based on consonant symbols which automatically has a short "a" pronounced onto them. If you want to write two or more consonant sounds together, you show that the "a" has disappeared mostly by omitting the right-most part of the first consonants in the combination. This is quite complicated, since the method of "halving" depends on the shape of each consonant and therefore varies.



We started the first class with some talk about rules that were needed for functioning together. I also found out from them that they rather start from the very beginning of the book than try to go on from where the class had left them some months ago.

#### 3.2.4.2 Naya Goreto Method With Some Additions.

In the beginning I just went according to the Facilitator's manual for Naya Goreto First Step (with the additions that we had suggested in the NFE Worker training). We started each class with everybody writing their own name and the date of the day in their notebooks. After some time we added to write their whole address as well. They all enjoyed getting proficient in this skill. Letters learned from name and address served as extra enforcement when they were later encountered in the book.

#### 3.2.4.3 Difficulties to Recognize Parts, Ends and Beginnings of Words.

Soon I faced one major difficulty. Illiterate learners are not used to think of words as having "parts", i.e. syllables. Therefore it was hard for them to make use of recognizing letters from known words. For example: You ask someone what their name begins with (or ends with), and they will invariably answer with the whole word of the name. It is a literacy-connected learned skill to think of words as having beginnings and endings and parts.

To help with this difficulty, we practiced hearing parts of words by hand clapping for each syllable, and then to recognize which one was first, second, etc.<sup>6</sup> We did this at the beginning of several sessions, using names and words familiar to the participants. This practice made a big difference for them, which was most noticed on those who for some reason had missed this activity and had a noticeable lack of the skill that the others had gained.

#### 3.2.4.4 Problems that Could Be Solved by Whole-Language Methods.

While working along according to the method in the manual for NG I, I continuously encountered problems that I suspected could have been alleviated by a more pure Whole-Language approach of teaching. However, I had reasoned this to be impossible to implement at a time when I didn't have a trained facilitator to help, and also was unsure about how much time I myself would be able to put into the class. If the facilitator ended up having to do most of the class herself, it would be easier for her to have the method clearly laid out in the manual to follow.

Some of the problems that I encountered were:

-The futility of drilling for remembrance of letters and vowel symbols. It would work for that particular class meeting, and then be forgotten by the next

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<sup>6</sup> Only later, at the seminar in Tansen (see section 3.1.6 in the Diary) did I find out that the Gorkha Project were using these kinds of activities in a trial pre-reading program, mainly designed by Jessie Glover, seconded to UMN from WBT/SIL (Wycliffe Bible Translators/Summer Institute of Linguistics).

(This problem was aggravated by the very irregular attendance of most participants).

-In spite of Nepali being fairly phonetic (compared to English and Swedish), it still has several confusing irregularities that are hard for adult learners to master. Examples are; two different vowels representing the sound "ee", the pronunciation difference between them have basically disappeared and the rules for which one to use are full of exceptions and cause continuous debate between even highly educated people. One of the two symbols for "ee" is written before the consonant that it is actually pronounced after(!); similarly the combination-consonants involving "r" also uses symbols which are written before the letter if they are pronounced after, and after the letter if they are to be pronounced before (before and after being defined by the direction of reading from left to right); all consonants have an automatic short "a" sound attached to them, unless another vowel is indicated by symbol. If the "a" is not to be pronounced, that is sometimes indicated by a "cut off" symbol, but sometimes you just have to know that it is not to be pronounced. This problem causes a common difference between read and spoken Nepali, which lessens understanding of what is read (this happens also for students high up in the formal school system).

-Some of the letter shapes are confusingly similar. A common differentiation problem is between "ta" त and "pa" प. This suggests the need for pre-literacy

practice in recognizing differences in shape, etc. This is something that is being tried in the Gorkha Project (see note 6).

-Finally, the irregular attendance itself makes it hard to follow a book where each step builds on the one before. Either you end up repeating so much that fast learners get bored, or you go on and lose those who missed previous sessions.

I do feel that much of these problems could be alleviated to some degree by using the whole-language methods as the basis, and supplement with the primer books. However, the whole-language methods produce their own set of problems (which will be examined in the Conclusive Thoughts section ahead).

#### 3.2.4.5 Trying W-L Methods on First Story in NG I.

The first short story in the NG I primer comes after 5 keywords, which include a total of 7 consonants, 4 vowel symbols and one half-consonant construction. The title of the story is "khetii", meaning farming, a familiar enough topic to all rural participants. The story is just a few sentences long. After having read the story in the book according to the facilitator's manual instructions, we cut it up into schema-story pieces. The pieces were shared around in groups. With a few hints from me, they managed to get the story back into the correct order.



Fig. 20: The women of the Khalanga class read a "schema" version of the "Khetii" story, that they have just pieced together.

The next day we reviewed, and then I cut the paragraphs into sentences, which they put back into order and read. The same day we also cut sentences up into words for them to put back in order. The next day we cut the sentences into syllables for the most advanced learners to reconstruct. Here they encountered the half-consonant letters, which they mostly would just overlook the need for: In "kaanchhii", "kaa" is a full consonant, "n" is a halved "na" and "chhii" is a full consonant. Most would construct "kaachhii" and think the word was complete, until they found the "n" piece lying around and started to wonder where it might belong.

We did much practice on this. Read your sentence, show me which is this word. Take apart a word, which letter is

"ka"? Mix letters again and name them. Reconstruct, copy the sentence in your notebook. The learners worked in pairs, where we tried to put them with matching level partners. Much individualized attention was needed. At this point we had about 5-6 learners in the classroom, and they kept Parbati and me busy the whole time.

One participant returned at this time, after having been absent most of the time since the beginning of the class. She had forgotten the few letters she had initially learnt. Thus she became close to a true whole-language trial (except that it was not her own story, but one from a book). She did very well, although she of course only memorized at this stage. Whenever she had trouble reconstructing a whole sentence, we went back to the original version and let her place her words on top of that. When she was asked what a particular word was, she would mostly not know. But after reading through the whole sentence and stopping at that word, she could tell. She also had not been part of the practice of telling syllables and beginning and end of words, which showed up in this exercise.

After doing the "khetii" story as a whole-language exercise, only after we had gone through it according to the steps in the manual, I decided to try a different approach. The book starts each chapter with the keyword, its breakdown, new syllables combined from new and old consonants and vowel symbols, then goes on to lists of words

made up by using those syllables. Finally there is a story using some of those words. I decided to do only the keyword identification, breakdown and new possible letter combinations, and then go directly to the story of the chapter and treat it with whole-language methodology. Only after chewing over the story until letters and words were recognized, would we go back to read the lists of all the possible words.

#### 3.2.4.6 Trial of New Reader Booklets.

At this time a different event was inserted in the class activities. Kath White from UMN HQ, who is directing the NFE Resource Office Follow-up Book Project, came to field test some of her "New Readers Books".<sup>7</sup> The Khalanga learners were of course nowhere near to be able to read books, however simple they might be. But we still wanted to test the story contents and the drawings, with them. We started up with discussing what the pictures meant, and got a lot of good suggestions on improving their clarity. Then the learners followed along in the books while Parbati read the story. It was about a woman like them who was denied going to school and only learnt to read and write in an

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<sup>7</sup>The Book Project was created to respond to the need for follow-up reading material for new literates. It is planned to produce at least 100 titles in several difficulty levels. There will be a variety of subjects, most of them general interest type, to supplement the more commonly produced technical advice booklets. Examples from the books we tried, are: One book with four short stories about women's lives, another about a rather funny misunderstanding in a marital relationship, a third about a woman who was almost lured to go to India where she would have ended up sold for prostitution, and the fourth is a Nepali medical doctor's account of the great earthquake in Kathmandu in the early part of this century. The emphasis is on collecting stories from people whose lives the new readers can relate to.

adult literacy class (a true story recorded as told by a learner in UMN's Surkhet Project, in a district adjacent to ours, which contributed to similarity of culture and situation). There was instant excitement: "Oh that we could learn to read quickly so we can read these stories for ourselves!" And: "If she could get her story published in a book, maybe we can do that with ours too!" It was also interesting to see how they tried to follow along in the book and began to recognize some words and letters that were repeated.

#### 3.2.4.7 W-L Methods on Second Story in NG I.

The next day, while Kath was still with us, we started working on the second story of the NG I book. It is called "putalii gamakka chhe", which means "Putalii is pleased with herself". It is about a woman who learns weaving at a training and her husband buys her a loom, after which she produces all kinds of useful materials to the amazement of her neighbors. This subject is much further removed from the everyday reality of the learners (the purpose for putting it in the primer is obviously to encourage learners to participate in cottage industry trainings). It was much harder for them to deal with this story. Not only because of the unfamiliar subject, but also because of the graded reading material causing the use of some verb forms that are not commonly found in the spoken Nepali of rural areas. It was Kath who pointed out this to me, saying it really shows





Fig. 21: From right: Tanja-Birgit, Kath and Parbati watch as the Khalanga class learners piece together the "Putalii" story. (Photo by Graeme Gugerl.)

how much more useful reading materials from learner's own stories are.

We worked on this story for about a week with all possible kinds of practice, but still they had trouble recognizing the words and letters involved. It goes to show that irrelevant reading material certainly affects the learning process.

#### 3.2.4.8 Letter-Chart Trials.

Shortly after this I tried another idea from my NG II Manual. I had made big charts with all the possible consonant and vowel symbol combinations in Devanagari (the name of the alphabet used for Nepali as well as for Hindi

and Sanskrit). Giving charts to each pair of learners, I told them to identify with a mark on the charts in their books as well as on the matching letters on the big chart, all the letters that they had encountered so far. It was mainly a practice in recognizing shapes, and to some extent recognizing pronunciation as well. They enjoyed this activity, giving them a feel of "we have achieved this much already".

We also tried to cut one chart up and identify all known letters from a mixed pile on a blackboard flat on the floor. This was much harder for them, as well as causing practical problems with the small cards getting lost on the floor. Even so they worked on it diligently for one session and had some fun and friendly competition ("if you don't know what this one is, I can tell") in the process.

#### 3.2.4.9 W-L Methods with Learner Generated Stories.

After the discouragement caused by irrelevancy of graded stories in the book, I decided to try to take some stories directly from the participants. I found it hard to get a topic that all could feel they owned. The gender and caste mixture caused by Kali Bahadur and the Chhetri woman's participation, prevented the use of possible topics from the low caste women's experience of oppression. I have a feeling there would have been a lot of material causing strong involvement there. Finally we settled on people telling stories from what they had done during the last day.

Fortunately they came up with subjects that all of them could relate to: Going to the water mill to grind flour, washing clothes and working as day laborer in the wheat harvest.

Three short tales about these topics were combined into one story and recorded. I found out that you have to make sure you are able to do some revisions in the way the story is told, before you commit it to writing with marker pen on newsprint. One girl used low form<sup>8</sup> when talking about a relative that she traditionally should have shown respect. Not wanting to interfere with how they expressed themselves, I just recorded it as she told it. But when we got to reading it together, all the older women objected furiously to this impropriety, so I had to change it as best as was possible on the sheet.

They seemed to have much more fun working with these stories from their own lives, than with those from the book. Even so, they tired of them before they were really proficient enough with the letters and words involved. The activity was very useful for allowing learners to work at their own level and speed. Whenever suitable and acceptable to themselves they worked in pairs.

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<sup>8</sup> Nepali language has four "levels" of addressing a person depending on respect due: Low, middle, high and royal form. The form also changes the ending of verbs accordingly. Commonly, low form is used for animals, your own children, and sometimes by high caste people to low caste persons. Middle form is used between friends and family and to children of others. High form is used to anybody you don't know, or whom you have to show respect. Royal form is used to and about the King and his family. It is also commonly used among the Thakuri and Chhetri people, basically replacing the regular high form.

Kali Bahadur soon mastered the three stories told by the women (he too has to go to the mill and wash clothes, and cutting wheat was a chore he was familiar with from his life as bond-slave to a rich landowner, before he was bought free by John, the Peace Corps worker). After he was through with those three stories, we recorded his own stories, and he worked on them in the same way. Midway into this, his younger (and equally unschooled) brother came to live with him and joined the class also. He started from zero by working on the stories his brother had told. Being Kali Bahadur's life story, they were of course familiar to the younger brother as well. In this way he became a true whole-language learner from the very beginning and did well with it. Since Kali Bahadur was ahead, he assisted his brother, so we had only to check on Kali Bahadur's own work.

#### 3.2.4.10 The Facilitator Parbati's Involvement.

During the whole process of the class, Parbati had taken responsibility for the class on her own many times when I had to be away for other work. She is very smart and caught on quickly to the ideas of whole-language approach, in spite of its total foreignness from anything she had encountered during her own schooling. At one refresher training for NFE Workers, Parbati and I presented some of our experience. The NFE Workers were very interested and asked a lot of valid questions about the practicality of the various activities we had tried.

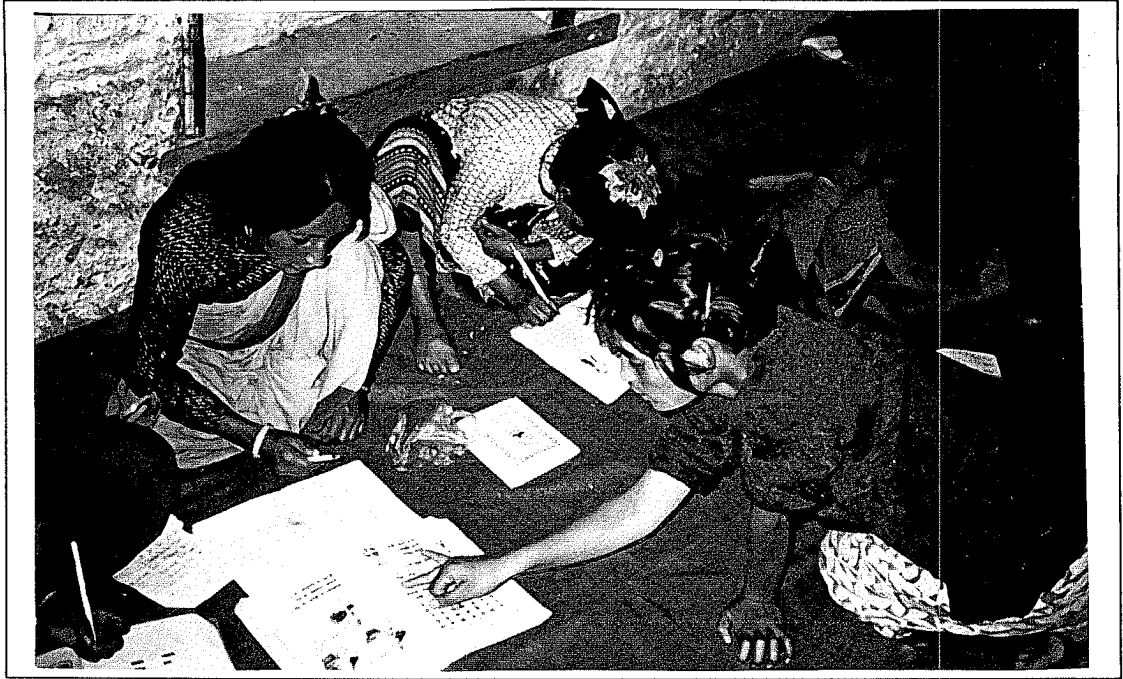


Fig. 22: Parbati assisting Khalanga learners who are working with the Naya Goreto Step I book.

At this point it was time for me to leave the project. I instructed Parbati to continue with a mixture of following the NG books and taking more stories, according to the interest of the learners. I only know that the class has continued, in spite of very low attendance numbers, but I do not know how they have continued. Parbati promised to write to me once a week, but hasn't been able to keep up neither frequency nor detail of account. (She has been very busy with her Campus studies, because the government decided to make up for time lost in the education system caused by the political upheaval around the revolution and ensuing elections, by forcing the first year students of this years to complete their studies and do the annual exam after only 6 months!)

### 3.2.5 Some Conclusive Thoughts.

First of all it should be noted that I was not able to plan this trial experience well enough, nor was I able to follow up on it for the whole time of the basic curriculum. Therefore no decisive conclusions can be drawn from it, about how whole-language teaching methods compare to the NG method in this situation. However, this experience should still offer some useful insights for planning future trials.

The advantages of increasing whole-language type of methods in the total curriculum are:

- Much more interesting and motivation-increasing for the learners.
- More able to meet the various goals of learners.
- Helpful for having many learners at different levels in the same class, i.e. helpful when attendance is irregular.
- Seems more effective than phonics drilling to help new learners recognize shape/pronunciation relationships.

The disadvantages of increasing use of whole-language methods in this context are:

- Requires a lot of self-direction and imagination, as well as a thorough understanding of the whole idea behind the whole-language approach, by the facilitator.
- The writing of several copies of the Big Story on newsprint takes much time because it is important that it be written exactly the same way on all copies with little variation in the shapes of identical letters.

-Laying out of Big Story pieces on the floor requires more space than most village classrooms ever have access to. Groups of two working on different activities also take much space and the letters and words from different activity-sets tend to get mixed up.

-A lot of individualized attention is required from the facilitator. Questionable if it is possible in normal size (15-25 learners) classes with one facilitator.

-In our classroom we had electric lights much of the time. In village classrooms there are limited numbers of kerosene lanterns which take up floor space and require certain seating arrangements around them which might not be compatible with moving story pieces about.

From the above it seems that increasing the use of whole-language methods could be impossible in the situation of our village classes. However, I think it would be possible to implement a mixed approach, where we try to get as much of the positive effects as possible, while trying to avoid most of the problems.

The most interesting approach that I have heard of is the pre-reading program in UMN's Gorkha Project. There a two week initial program concentrates on activities that help learners recognize differences in shapes, hear number of syllables and recognize beginning and end in words they know and practice writing the strokes necessary to make up Nepali letters. In the pre-reading program the participants also learn to write their own names. They also use a

"literacy-song" on a local folk tune, for whole-language type learning. From the pre-reading program the learners go on to work mostly with the Naya Goreto Primers (Glover, 1991, and personal communication).

Additionally, the Gorkha Project is also trying out the "two-track" approach, presented in "Working Together For Literacy" by Stringer & Faraclas (1987). In this approach there are two different facilitators who take turns with the class using totally different methods, one being whole-language based (called the Story-Track) and the other more phonics drilling style (called the Workbook-Track). The idea is to make it simple for the facilitators while still offering a varied methodology to the learners, hoping to meet the needs of various learning styles among them. I have not had the chance to really get to know exactly how this is implemented in the Gorkha Project, or how it has worked out there.

For the Jajarkot Project's classes, in the short term, I suggest that we continue with the combined Naya Goreto curriculum + some whole-language inspired activities, which we introduced to our NFE Workers at the first refresher training (see section 3.1.5, pages 31-33). I also suggest that we start using some local songs or other stories that the learners know well, for learning by whole-language methods, alongside with working in the NG books.

For the long term, my suggestion is that we should develop some kind of pre-reading program, like the one tried



in Gorkha. Besides helping in the teaching of specific skills, that two week program also has another useful side effect, which was pointed out by the Gorkha Project staff. It serves as an intermediate time to weed out those who drop out early, at a time when it is still possible to take in new learners as replacements, without them losing too much of the regular curriculum.

In the future I hope to get the chance to try a well planned, purely whole-language approach with at least one class, through from beginning to end. This would enable us to really assess how it compares with the key-word approach of the Naya Goreto Primers, and with the somewhat combined approach such as we have been able to implement it.

## CHAPTER 4

### REFLECTIVE SECTIONS.

#### 4.1 How to Link Adult Literacy with Community Development?

Jajarkot Project is planned to link an effort to increase adult literacy rates, with other community development activities. It is recognized that literacy per se is of little value unless it is achieved in a context in which it can be a tool to improve the quality of life. In the original project plans there are no details spelled out about how this linkage shall be achieved. In making such plans, there are many factors and questions to take into account. In the following sections I will attempt to look at some of them, for the benefit of continuous planning of Jajarkot Project, as well as for other similar future projects.

##### 4.1.1 "Community Development" Questioned and Re-defined.

When a concept like "Community Development" becomes a widely accepted term, it is easy to use it without thinking of what definition you attribute to it. Therefore I would like to start with a brief examination of the concept.

##### 4.1.1.1 The "Community Development" Concept Examined.

First of all I would like to examine the idea of "community development" briefly. It seems that this idea

(defined as when whole communities get organized to act jointly to solve their problems) has become the sole perceived remedy for the predicaments of the poor. However, I think this can be questioned. Communism is "community development" in its extreme. It has been shown to always fail when enforced from outside, but can succeed when entered into voluntarily. A typical example of the former type is the "Krishi Sajha" (Farmer's cooperative) established for the farmers by the government in Nepal. This venture is really considered by the farmers to be just another government office, and not at all their own cooperative that is there for their own benefit.

There will always be certain needs in communities that can only be met by joint action, such as environmental sanitation, establishing schools and water systems, etc. Concerning such needs, we will have to work with the communities, both as motivators for joint action, and as facilitators in the process to find the mode of community organization that suit their own culture and specific situation.

Then there are other activities, such as income generation, tree nurseries, medicine supply, irrigation construction, etc., that can be done either by whole communities, or by special interest groups, or by family or private venture. For such we should let the people themselves have the initiative on how they want to organize for any development action needed. We should be careful not

to push the idea of joint ventures, on communities which have no motivation or interest in such.

In this context I would like to mention two examples of development situations, when the people chose the alternative that we, the "development-facilitator-outsiders" maybe least expected. One concerns the Community Health Clinic work in the village Paimey. This clinic had been a joint venture between the local community and UMN (which seconded one expatriate nurse there), for many years. When it was time for the expatriate to leave Nepal, it was decided that the work was ready to be handed over totally to the local community. But instead of taking over the clinic as a community project, the people of Paimey asked that it was handed over to be run as a private business by a Nepali couple that they knew and trusted. In this case (maybe because of the trustworthy personalities of the particular couple involved), the people preferred "market economy system" over "communism". (Personal communication with Mary Cundy, the UMN-seconded expatriate in Paimey).

The second example is a more general observation. During my years in the Andhikhola Project I heard much complaint by the local people about the quality of teaching in the government school. The majority of those quality problems were caused by inefficiency of the local management committee, and so there was scope for parents to get organized and involved to effect change. But rather than doing that, people started looking for private schooling

alternatives for their children. Before long, two private primary schools were established in the small hill town bazaar of Galyang. People were more willing to pay fees, to secure better quality education for their children, than to try organizing the community to effect change in the schooling that is provided free, and in which there is provision for considerable local autonomy of management. Of course there are also many other factors affecting the quality of government schools, which are not possible for the local management to influence (this was especially true in the previous non-democratic system). But even so, this remains an interesting reminder of that people's own choice is not always to act through organizing as a community to solve their problems.

#### 4.1.1.2 The Need for a New Definition.

If by Community Development we mean the facilitation of development activities for all of certain geographically defined communities, then we might end up just helping the rich to get richer. This becomes especially questionable in the context of mixed caste/class villages. Since one of the goals of UMN is to reach those who are the poorest and most disadvantaged, we have to be wary of letting our project benefits be usurped by the wealthy and powerful. To really be able to reach the most disadvantaged groups, community development needs to be redefined to target specific groups of people who share a similar low caste and economic status,

rather than giving our assistance to all of any geographically defined community. Concerning activities that do need all community participation, such priority on the poor might mean to enable them to have a strong voice in how the activity should be implemented in the most equitable way.

The idea of the Small Farmers Development Program of the Agriculture Development Bank of Nepal, is a good example of targeting a weak group in society. Small and near-landless farmers cannot benefit from the bank's regular services, because their landholdings are not worth enough to serve as the required collateral for loans. Therefore this program seeks to give specific service of agricultural input loans through groups of small farmers, who jointly guarantee each other's loans. Along with the loan service the Bank facilitates adult literacy classes, trainings in various subjects, group savings schemes, etc., for the groups, according to their needs.

#### 4.1.1.3 Recommendations on Community Development Strategies.

Pertaining to the discussion above, these are my recommendations for community development ventures:

-Our target communities should be defined as the most disadvantaged groups within any geographical community. These include the low caste, the landless / near landless, the illiterates and the women.

-We should only give facilitation and/or materials assistance to whole communities (including the more wealthy and powerful) when it concerns activities that can only be implemented in a community joint action way. Such assistance should also be limited to activities that are of crucial concern for the well being of the disadvantaged group. This includes drinking water systems, schools, public forest management, etc.

-We should consider the type of activity, whether or not it requires whole community joint action for implementation, and if so work on community organization forms that are appropriate for the local culture. If the involvement of the whole community is not necessary, we should let the people choose for themselves their preferred mode of organization.

-Specifically we should not push whole community organized savings schemes and income generation schemes on those who do not have the motivation, interpersonal trust and cooperative tradition necessary for such activities. The present concept of having literacy participants pay fees into a class fund meant for community development activities (see section 2.9, page 16, and section 3.1.4, page 27), should be revised accordingly.

#### 4.1.2 Initiating Work with Adult Literacy Classes and Through them Other Community Development Activities.

The Jajarkot Project was started as a response to a request from HMG/N/MOEC for a district wide adult literacy campaign. It was only on UMN's initiative that the idea of including other types of development activities, was incorporated into the Agreement for the project (see Appendix A). It is clear that MOEC's priority is to have the adult literacy rate raised, and that they expect the Project to be emphasizing literacy classes. Therefore the question of which activity should precede the other is not really relevant for Jajarkot Project. This project is bound by agreement to initialize community development through the venue of adult literacy classes. However, it is relevant to examine the question of sequence of activities, for the purpose of planning future projects.

##### 4.1.2.1 From Literacy to Other Community Development Activities.

This is the sequence of activities prescribed for Jajarkot Project in its Agreement. To work according to this sequence has the following:

###### 4.1.2.1.1 Advantages:

- Literacy classes is a structured activity which is easy to use to start up a project.



-Literacy and numeracy help facilitate learning that are required for subsequent development activities, such as book keeping as part of an entrepreneurship training for income generation.

-The adult literacy curriculum introduces the learners to a variety of new subjects and knowledge, which widen their horizons and give them an increased range of options for action.

-The process of discussion about key subjects in the literacy primers helps learners gain skills for public interaction that will be useful for community development participation.

-The discussion process also helps in identifying the needs of the community, and the possible avenues for action to meet those needs.

-The literacy curriculum includes important information about the outside resources from government and other organizations, that are available to the villagers to help facilitate development.

-The literacy class enlists the ideas of the least powerful, i.e. the illiterates, and brings them into the process of identifying the needs of the community. When development facilitators initiate contact in other ways, they mostly first encounter those who are powerful and already wealthy enough to experiment with new techniques on their own.

#### 4.1.2.1.2 Disadvantages:

-If gaining literacy and numeracy skills is not a priority need felt by learners and community leaders, their participation will not be whole-hearted enough to lead to any of the advantages listed above.

-Often the literacy classes attract a majority of learners who will not continue to be part of the class village. This is the case with young girls who will be married off to other villages, and therefore cannot form the base for community projects in the class village.

-If people are so economically restrained that they cannot afford the time to participate in literacy classes, i.e. they have to migrate seasonally for income to survive, then those most in need will not be reached by the benefits of learning.

-If people do not see book learning as giving any possible benefits, besides the idea of getting a white collar job, then they will lack the motivation to participate in a useful way. They may not appreciate the potential usefulness of literacy and numeracy for endeavors to improve their children's achievement in school, their farming methods, their family health and sanitation habits, and their income generation practices.

-A literacy class brings together a group of people which might not be of a homogenous enough background to work well together in any other kind of community development activity. Therefore, in order to achieve a transition from

literacy learning to group action, an additional phase of reorganization into smaller, homogenous interest groups might still be needed.

#### 4.1.2.2 Factors That Seem to Promote Success for the Present Work Sequence.

In Jajarkot Project we are dealing with a situation where the agreement states adult literacy classes as the primary emphasis, and other development activities as something that will "also" be implemented, in association to the classes. Let us examine what kind of factors seem to promote success for work in such a sequence. The factors mentioned below are some which are present in the Project's plans and organization as it is, and some which are not present, but which I feel have to be there for success to be possible.

##### 4.1.2.2.1 Project Agreement Vague Enough to Allow Adjusting Project Size to Situation.

In the agreement it is stated that "The project will be conducted in the southern, most populous part of Jajarkot District during the 3 ½ year Phase I period". Additionally there is provision for extension of the agreement up to the year 2000, including expansion of the target area. It doesn't say how much coverage the project will have in terms of numbers of classes and learners. This leaves some openness for adjusting the size of the project to what is

needed for quality work. However, if the MOEC does not feel that the project has had enough impact (most likely defined as numbers of adults made literate), they might possibly hesitate to approve extensions for Phase II and III.

#### 4.1.2.2.2 Agreement Allows for Recruiting Expatriates

##### According to Upcoming Needs for Expertise.

The expatriate posts mentioned in the agreement are up to 5 in number. Project Director, NFE Specialist and Income Generation Specialist are specified as to title. The other 2 are called Community Development Specialists. These are very useful for keeping an openness as to what technical specialties the project will be able to provide assistance in. If specific technical needs show up as important for the literacy class communities, specialists can be recruited according to those needs. Or alternatively, the remaining expatriate posts can be recruited for as general development facilitators, who will help the communities to contact other specialist resources for short term help, as needed.

#### 4.1.2.2.3 Nepali Staff Recruitment Prioritizes Local People.

In the plans there is an emphasis to recruit Nepali staff as much as possible locally. Initially some specialized trained staff have to be brought in from outside for the senior level posts. But as time goes on and the project grows, it is planned to in-service train staff from

the grass-roots level to be able to take up posts with more responsibilities.

This emphasis on local people will hopefully help to keep the project culturally appropriate. It will also help us to train our staff from the beginning in the ideology that is important for the project to become truly useful for the people we work with.

There are two problems with the local staff emphasis that we have to be aware of. One is that, because of the very low education level of women in the district, it might be hard to find enough women staff. It is important to strive for at least 50 % women among the staff, since at least 50 % of the learners will be women. If it proves impossible to find enough local women with the required schooling level, the women-requirement has to take precedence over the local-requirement.

A second problem is that most of the educated people in the district tend to come from the upper class. They have all been raised in this feudal system of relationships with those of poorer status and lower caste. Many of them carry with them a (sometimes sub-conscious) authoritarian style for relating to the poor and low caste people. Therefore it will be very important for the project to constantly and consciously work on the issues of how project staff have to relate with all program participants in a truly equal and respectful way.

#### 4.1.2.2.4 Strong Local Motivation for Adult Literacy Learning.

If adult literacy learning is a felt and expressed need among the target group people, using adult literacy classes as the entry point for community development can be highly successful. As discussed in section 4.1.2.1.2, page 98, this is a necessary condition to achieve any of the advantages that can come out of initiating community development through adult literacy classes.

As far as my experience from the Jajarkot Project area is concerned, this kind of motivation has not been apparent there. There are individual learners, notably often young girls and women, who are motivated to become literate. But often those who have the power to make it practically possible for these learners (mostly their male family members), don't see this as important enough to adjust their own input into the family work schedule for. The result is that learners join the classes, but are not able to fulfill their commitment consistently enough to reach a working literacy proficiency.

This situation shows some level of personal motivation for literacy, but not enough of a community motivation to make the program a success. If there is lack of consistent involvement on the part of learners and the wider community, the literacy classes cannot become a useful basis for other development activities.

#### 4.1.2.2.5 Concentrated Villages.

For conducting literacy classes in general it is important that the area has villages concentrated enough for a minimum number of learners to be able to meet close to their homes for classes. This is especially important for night classes. Most commonly day classes are not seen as a viable alternative by the local people themselves (see section 3.1.10, page 41).

For the classes to go on to work together on other development activities, close geographical proximity becomes even more important to make joint ventures practically possible.

From what I have seen of the new work area in Jhapra, scattered villages can become a problem for the classes. We will have to adjust the minimum class size to be able to serve learners in those kinds of locations. The regular class size is set to 15-25 learners per class. An alternative has been worked out where a lower minimum class size will be accepted, while the facilitator stipend will be reduced accordingly. It remains to be seen if it will be possible to recruit facilitators for these smaller classes, especially after they get to know that others get more pay for the same time input, just because their classes have higher numbers of learners.

#### 4.1.2.2.6 True Participant Ownership of the Program.

It is possible to run an isolated adult literacy program as an outsider-controlled activity and still achieve some success in improving adult literacy rates. But if the literacy classes are to be the basis for continuing community development activities, participant ownership and control of the program from the very beginning, is a necessary condition for success.

To make this possible, the true motivation for adult literacy learning, as mentioned in 4.1.2.2.4 above, has to be present. Additionally most of the Opposing Factors mentioned in Section 4.1.2.3, have to be avoided. Finally, we have to organize the class management in such a way that the participants themselves, rather than village political leaders, are in control (see section 4.2.5, page 131-132).

#### 4.1.2.2.7 Small Groups as Base for Income Generation Development Action.

As discussed in section 4.1.2.1.2, page 98-99, the size and lack of homogeneity of a literacy class can be a problem for it to serve as a base for development activities. This is particularly true with income generation activities. As a follow-up activity for the literacy classes, we need to facilitate the formation of small groups with members from similar socio-economic status who have chosen to work together.



Basing rural development work on small groups is recommended by Robert Judge (who has extensive experience working with adult literacy and income generation groups in a remote area of Gorkha District in Nepal):

Using small groups as a basis for activities would seem appropriate for Nepal, given the pressure of subsistence farming on most families, and the general pattern of living in small groups of houses. In addition, in small groups, a high degree of tangible commitment is possible, as inner conflicts are lessened, and space is given for all the members to gain political experience necessary for the understanding and defending of group interests. Development carried out by homogenous groups is much more likely to be successful than where there are wide differences in beliefs, status and aspirations of the participants (Judge, 1991).

Several examples point to the effectiveness of small and homogenous groups for income generation and social development activities. One example is the follow-up activities of Friends In Village Development Bangladesh (FIVDB). FIVDB uses a basic literacy/numeracy primer set with discussion topics focusing on a mixture of awareness raising and skills related subjects. After the basic course, those interested to continue learning are organized in groups of five who choose to work together. These small groups are offered training in different subjects, among them various income generation skills. The program has been very successful in helping poor women, both to get an additional income to support their families, and to become aware of their equal right to be involved in the decision-making process of their families and communities. A measure

of the program's success is that some local fundamentalist muslim groups have felt so threatened by women's increased awareness and independence, that they have even resorted to such measures as burning down one of the program's training centers! (Mainus Sultan, 1991, personal communication).

Another success example of development based on small groups is the Grameen Bank, also in Bangladesh. Grameen Bank evolved from a vision by one man, Yunis Muhammed, to use credit as a catalyst for social development among landless people, with a major emphasis on women. The basic unit of the whole organization is the small group. It is formed of five landless persons from the same sex, same village and same economic background, but from different families. The group receives training, and all members take turns in the leadership positions. They receive loans for income generation activities and are responsible for guaranteeing each other's loans. The groups also encourage members to save and contribute to funds used for various needs, such as emergencies, collective development purposes and children's welfare (for schools). Six groups form a Center together, where problems and issues are discussed, as well as bank business carried out. The development facilitation functions and service functions of the Grameen Bank, exist to assist the small groups. An extensive workshop program focuses on issues for social development. (Fuglesang & Chandler, 1987.)

#### 4.1.2.3 Factors That Seem to Oppose Success for the Present Work Sequence.

The factors mentioned here are problems that I have observed to be present in the Jajarkot Project situation and organization, and that I feel are opposing success for the work of initiating community development through adult literacy classes.

##### 4.1.2.3.1 Immature Participants who will Not be Residing Permanently in the Class Village:

In many classes the majority of participants are young girls. They more often have a "school attitude" to the literacy learning and are mostly not motivated to discuss deeply on the subjects in the primers. They just want to get on with learning to read and write and catch up on what they missed by not being allowed to go to school. To really meet the needs of this particular group, separate classes are needed. So called "Cheli-Beti" (means girls/sisters) classes, that have their own specific materials and curriculum, are conducted in some areas by the government and/or some NGOs. This type of work has not been part of Jajarkot Project's plans, but if we continue to get most participants from that category, we need to reconsider our plans (within the limitations of the project agreement).

Young girls are also not permanent residents in the villages where they grow up. They will soon be married off to other villages. Therefore they cannot be expected to

have neither interest nor the practical ability to move on to form community development or income generation groups, as a follow-up to the literacy course.

#### 4.1.2.3.2 Seasonal Migration of Men.

It seems that in many villages the majority of families have one or more men going off to India for seasonal work during the winter. This leaves many women alone to care for children and animals and whatever field work still has to be done for the winter crops. This often hinders them from being able to participate in the classes. Many of the men say they will not go this year and join a class, just to change their minds about it and drop out to leave for India, a month or so into the class. This problem is one major reason for there being mostly young girls left to be participants. This situation speaks for initiating activities to improve family incomes from farm production and other sources, to enable the men to stay at home the whole year.

#### 4.1.2.3.3 Gender Mixed Classes.

In many classes there are both women and men. This would seem ideal to get groups working for real all inclusive community development. However, in this particular culture and situation the mixed gender situation is mostly a hindrance for the class process (section 3.1.11, pages 47-48, and section 3.1.12, pages 52-53). Not only

does it hinder literacy learning by the prejudice and oppressive behavior of the men against the women (in some cases young girl learners in absolute majority over a few men, equally harass and make it impossible for the men to learn effectively). The mixture also hinders good participatory discussion on issues, because of shyness and a tradition to not speak one's mind in front of members of the opposite sex. A lack of in-depth and participatory discussion will cause problems for the class to become involved together in other community development activities.

#### 4.1.2.3.4 The Extension Worker Versus the Real Facilitator.

The way that practical activities presently are encouraged in the class villages, more takes the form of telling people what to do, rather than motivating them or enlisting their own ideas and initiatives for activities.

The "telling-people-what-to-do-syndrome" is a major problem among all levels of staff. The NFE-Worker trainees easily fall into that, instead of asking questions and enlisting people's ideas and helping them to think through their own problems. But even among higher level staff, with many years of experience as well as some training in NFE related areas, this is a problem. Most can talk about it theoretically, but to act it out in practice is more difficult.

The method of coming in and just starting preaching about solutions will mask any expression of felt needs by

the participants. When villagers are just told what to do, the program will not move forward into activities that the people are really motivated about.

To help to solve this problem, the project needs to adjust the size to allow for more contact with the grass-roots by senior staff (see further discussion on this under 4.1.2.3.6, page 112). Additionally this subject needs to be more emphasized in staff training and supervision.

#### 4.1.2.3.5 Formal Terminology and Authority Models.

When rural people in Nepal encounter persons they perceive to have either a higher education and status, or authority, over them, they address them deferentially with imported terms such as "Sir". The term "Sir" in villagers' minds denotes someone with authority that they have to respect and defer to. (This is done irrespective of the person's gender; I have often been called "Sir" too!) In the schools the teachers are addressed with "Sir", "Madam" and "Miss".

When our project staff first meet with villagers, they are also automatically addressed with these imported, formal titles. It takes some effort to change the people's idea on this. Most of the staff have not bothered to make the effort, either caused by ignorance of the importance of vocabulary on people's perception of the whole program, or by a feeling of personal gratification enjoyed by being addressed as an authority.

A couple of the NFE Worker trainees have persisted and managed to get the villagers to address them as insiders. This shows that it is possible to change this habit if you try. While I have no proofs to show that those NFE Workers were more effective as community motivators than the others, I still am sure that being addressed as an insider helps in the process of trying to become one.

The common local perception of adult literacy classes seem to be that they are a replacement for schooling opportunities missed during childhood. Therefore the villagers will mostly refer to the adult literacy program in terms borrowed from the formal school system, using terms such as student, teacher, school, etc., rather than participant-learner, facilitator-helper, adult class, etc.

In non-formal education situations for community development purposes, we want to encourage a spirit of equality, people's participation and ownership of the programs. A vocabulary based on formal authority systems has a definitely negative influence on this endeavor.

We have to promote an understanding of the adult literacy program as something about learning for life together, rather than about top-down teaching to achieve formal certificates for mere status. This requires that we start off by using a vocabulary that points to a difference.

The facilitator's training materials for the NG series also encourages the use of the traditional forms of address between people involved in the adult literacy program. In

Nepal's rural culture this is done by addressing each other by kinship terms, sometimes combined with ones name (i.e. Krishna-older-brother), and usually you earn respect by seniority. An adaption common in the modernizing society, where it sometimes is hard to assign an appropriate kinship term, is to add the ending "-ji" to the person's name to show due respect for your co-worker (i.e. Krishna-ji).

I think that this is a key issue for Jajarkot Project to address decisively in staff training and supervision. All staff must understand that we are not there to be authority figures over the villagers, but to be facilitators working with and for them.

#### 4.1.2.3.6 Too Big Size of Project.

The Jajarkot Project was planned to employ up to 25 NFE Workers and have up to 200 classes running at the same time. 2-3 Ilaka Sub-Center Coordinators are supposed to be in-service recruited and on-the-job trained, as well as up to 5 Development Assistants. There is provision for 5 expatriate posts (Project Director and 4 Development Consultants) and about 3 senior Nepali posts (these are for personnel trained and experienced in NFE and recruited from outside). See Appendix E on Project Organization.

In implementing a project, the key concern is not so much about having the right ideas for how to implement a project (although this is of course a prerequisite). It is rather a matter of how to transfer those ideas, through to



all the staff and to the village participants. It is one thing for us upper level staff, with the benefit of an education that has taught us to question and analyze, to come to an understanding of how to work for transformation of communities and society. But then, how do we transfer those ideas to be implemented by staff and villagers, whose schooling and experience has taught them that development is something that outsiders come in and do for you?

I think that the size planned for Jajarkot Project will be a problem in the area of ideology transfer. The bigger the size, the greater the risk of losing crucial contact between the senior staff level and the grass roots level. If we think that we have an important perspective to offer, on how to work with participants on their own terms, then we must assure that we work in a structure which makes the dissemination of that perspective possible.

#### 4.1.2.3.7 Individualistic Culture and Distrust of Village Leaders.

One experience from the first teaching season is that, in most classes, the idea of a class fund has not worked out. First of all, most participants have a real lack of surplus money and struggle to barely get together what is needed for the kerosene and book cost (which is nominal, to help them realize that books are valuable and need to be taken care of). To add extra money monthly to a fund for some future community development activities, is often just

too much for their resources. But there is also a real lack of belief in that they will ever be able to do anything, as a group or community venture, that would be profitable for themselves personally. Many learners also show an open distrust for the village leaders that they have "chosen" to be on the committees. I have heard it expressed that they will not trust the money to be managed by their committee unless the Project keeps continuous control of the activities.

A similar problem of mistrust in community management of funds, is also mentioned in the Surkhet Project Evaluation Report. In a question concerning the management of village water systems maintenance funds, it is noted that when the fund is used for giving loans to earn interest, people felt that: "...there is little accountability" (UMN, 1991, page 40).

It seems clear to me that it is counterproductive in this kind of situation to make the class fund a compulsory activity for the classes. See section 4.1.1.3, pages 94-95, for further discussion on how to deal with community development organization according to local culture, and section 4.2.5, pages 131-132, for suggestions on how class management should be organized.

#### 4.1.3 Recommendations for Planning of Future Projects.

In most situations, people's real felt needs and motivations cannot be readily understood by just field

visits, which by nature are superficial. Even though there is more to needs than only what people feel motivated about, it is hard to reach them with other ideas, unless their own priorities are in some way addressed first. To truly attempt to do that, I think it is most useful to have projects with as open-ended plans as possible.

I suggest the following order of action for planning of future projects:

#### 4.1.3.1 Open-ended Agreement and Initial Planning.

Get as vague and all-covering as possible of an agreement with the government, to allow for truly initiating work according to the priorities of the target people.

The work of Andrew Bulmer in the community of Madhubasa, is a good example of starting work according to local people's priorities. Andrew was sent by UMN's Gobar Gas Company to find a site where a community owned and operated Gobar Gas (methane gas production from animal dung and other organic waste) plant could be tested. Madhubasa village had been reported to have a strong cooperative tradition.

Andrew went to live with the people in Madhubasa, and soon he found out that they had other more urgent needs than to install community Gobar Gas. Andrew was able to convince his supervisors to allow him to stay on in the village anyway. The villagers, under the leadership of their charismatic headman Indra Bahadur Kyapchhake, had already

started to try to solve some of their most acute problems themselves. Their attempts had largely failed because of a lack of technical knowledge and some expensive resources needed from outside. During his years in the village, Andrew was able to have input both as a motivator and as a facilitator for acquiring outside assistance.

With minimal outside resource input, and with maximum community participation and control, the Madhubasa villagers set to improve the quality of life in their community. Check-dams were built to stop the river from eroding away their land. A portion of the land reclaimed in this way was set aside for community income generation purpose. Wells (this village is located on the Terai flatland, just were the foothills of the Himalayas end) were dug for irrigation and drinking water. Trees were planted for additional flood control and for firewood and timber production. Eventually, a community Gobar Gas plant was also constructed, the gas supplying lights, cooking fuel, water pump fuel and sugarcane extractor fuel. (Andrew Bulmer, personal communication, and visits to Madhubasa in 1980 and 1988.)

The history of development action in Madhubasa is long and intriguing and (although Indra Bahadur Kyapchhake was tragically killed by a bus in 1988) it is still in the making. But the point I want to make here is that when an outside facilitator and whatever assistance resources there are available, are used to work along with people's own

initiative, then community ownership, participation and motivation for the work also follow.

#### 4.1.3.2 Share the Lives of the Target People.

Let the field staff go out and live and work with the people in their daily chores. From that position they can earn a right to be heard and can start talking with the villagers about what they feel needs to be done in their communities.

An excellent example of community motivation work at its best, is given in Durga Gurung's report on "Women's Involvement in Forest Management". Ms Gurung came to this hill farming community with the agenda to increase the people's awareness in issues relating to forestry and resource conservation. However, she did not set about telling the people all that she knew. Instead she lived and worked among them as one of their own and listened to the problems that they brought up.

Soon Ms Gurung could see that all the villagers' major problems were related in one way or another to the decreasing forest cover on the hills around their village. But even then, she did not start telling them how these things were related, but rather kept on asking questions until the people themselves started to make the connection, such as: "In the earlier days when the springs were flowing plentifully all year round, wasn't the hill top above totally covered with forest so deep that we were afraid to

venture in there for fear of leopards and other wild animals? Could there be a connection between good forest cover and year-round flowing springs?", etc. At this point the villagers started to ask Ms Gurung questions, and even requested her to facilitate more in-depth forestry information and training.

From there the villagers went on to learn more and more, and to take action to solve many of their problems. Further on in the process they undertook many activities such as: Drinking water system construction, tree planting in the collection area for their water source, starting a primary school, adult literacy classes, etc. When there were trainings and classes, everybody was very motivated to learn, since all of it had come out of their own needs, interests and requests.<sup>9</sup>

#### 4.1.3.3 Address Priority Needs of Participants first.

If adult illiteracy is a problem perceived important by the community, literacy classes can be promoted as the starting point of action for change. But if other needs have higher priority for the people, the project should also try to address those in some way. This could be both by discerning, and helping people to see, how those needs relate to the problem of illiteracy, as well as by

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<sup>9</sup>My first encounter with this story was at a workshop on Women's Involvement in Forest Management in May 1987, hosted by Winrock International, where I met Ms Gurung. Shortly afterwards I read the whole of her report. The village is located in the same district as where I worked before, so I have also had a chance to visit it and speak to the women in person and see their achievements.

activities that directly affect the fulfillment of those needs. If literacy and numeracy are truly useful for village people, then the need will become apparent to themselves as they go on to explore the options for improvement of their quality of life.

#### 4.1.3.4 Share Insights on Outsider-Observed Needs.

There are some kinds of needs that might not be expressed as felt needs by participants, but such that we as outsiders can observe as relevant needs, based on our knowledge about science and the experiences from other parts of Nepal and the world. Examples are: Lack of hygiene and environmental sanitation causing unnecessary spread of disease; malnutrition causing suffering from otherwise easy to heal diseases; mismanaged forests that need protection to ensure against future negative effects on the environment; etc.

Presently we promote environmental sanitation by trying to make latrine construction something all participants, facilitators and committee members should do. This is presented along with various motivation activities, to show why this is important for their own well-being. However, the results of this approach are often meager, often causing latrines to be built haphazardly, and to not be put to use once they are built.

Continuing with the latrine example, I think we should change strategy. In initial contacts with a community



Fig. 23: Kudu class participant posing with her mother and sisters by the latrine she built. When the old mother was asked if she was using it, she responded: "I would never use such a thing, but she uses it"!

requesting literacy classes, we should make the construction of a pit latrine for use by our resident or visiting staff workers, a condition for the village's participation in our program. It should be explained why we feel it necessary and why we don't want our staff to compromise their knowledge about the spread of disease, by having to use fields, paths or gullies. Then the subject should be worked on in the literacy class curriculum, providing the detailed knowledge of the why and how of environmental sanitation.

This strategy would have a number of desirable effects. First of all, this condition of constructing a latrine, would serve as a proof of the community's serious motivation



to be involved with the project. Secondly, it would enable project staff to live as examples of the improved practices that they believe in. Finally, the latrine will be there as an example for people while they learn in the classes about the motivation for improved environmental sanitation. If what they learn motivates them to adopt this practice, then they will be able to judge how to adapt and improve the construction to make it function in their own situations.

Improved nutrition for villagers is also a need which is not necessarily expressed as important by participant communities, but can be observed as a problem. There is a high incidence of follow-up complications to measles, indicating a lack of vitamin A. Many children are also visibly malnourished to some degree and therefore have increased susceptibility to many other diseases. Improved nutritional practices are promoted in the classes by encouraging every participant and facilitator to make a kitchen garden. Facilitators also conduct demonstrations in class on how to make rehydration solution and nutritious porridge for babies. A powerful motivation factor for improved practices is the demonstration of these in the lives of project staff and their families, living among the villagers and sharing their daily life.

While participants' expressed needs and initiatives should be enlisted and prioritized, we cannot avoid to also address needs and problems that we observe. As outsiders with some specific knowledge on the cause and effect of

certain problems, we have a responsibility to share this with the participating communities, for their benefit.

#### 4.2 Other Questions for On-going Planning.

##### 4.2.1 Felt Needs and Other Needs.

A commonly expressed "felt need" among villagers in rural Nepal is that: "Development is something that the government and other organizations should come in and do for us, and we are really entitled to that kind of service delivery". This is probably a result of experience from most of the "development" activities that they have met with so far. But no matter where it came from, it's an attitude we come across whenever we try to work with people.

An example of how hard it is to change such an attitude towards development, shows up in the 1991 evaluation of UMN's Surkhet Project. That project has always tried to work with the people, empowering them to be in charge of their own programs, waiting for the people's initiatives rather than going ahead and just implementing plans, etc. The evaluation itself was also carried out with impressive community participation in both the planning and the reporting.

However, in spite of the Surkhet evaluation report showing that the people have achieved a lot that they can continue on their own, it still is also full with comments

by community members showing the "do-it-for-us" syndrome. In many places the communities' response to the evaluation questions go something like this: "Yes, this and this improvement have happened, but the project should continue to help us with this and this and this, otherwise those programs will not be able to continue". The villagers list many activities as needing further assistance from the project, many of which they clearly could be responsible for themselves if they chose to (UMN, 1991, page 10).

Considering this prevalent attitude, it can sometimes become counterproductive to only do work according to the felt and expressed needs of the people. If we only leave it up to them, the people might express the "need" for us to continue to deliver services in a way that hinders any real transformation of communities in a way that is locally sustainable and self-reliant. Even though we don't like the idea of telling people what is best for them, this might be one of the few situations where that is desirable. We might have to say as a response to a "do-it-for-us" request: "We could do it for you, but we think that for long term sustainability, it is better that we help you to organize to do it yourself, raising your own resources for it, than for you to become dependent on outside input".

When we speak of needs, we have to recognize that there are several valid definitions of what constitutes a real need in any situation. First of all there are those needs that the people who are in the midst of the situation, feel

and express as important. Within this group of needs you have to recognize who expresses them, i.e. whose voice do you get to hear, the powerful only or the powerless also?

The second valid way of identifying needs in any particular situation, is by outside observation based on scientific knowledge and a wider experience. This has been discussed to some extent in section 4.1.3.4, page 119-122. Here I would just like to add a few comments on the subject. An example of the importance of scientifically observed needs is the problem of deforestation. In many cases, people do not "feel" the need to address issues of forest management and regeneration until deforestation has already gone too far. In some situations, especially in mountainous regions like Nepal, that might mean topsoil lost in such a way that forest never can be re-established in that location. Therefore we cannot wait for people to "feel" the need for forest management, we have to initiate work in this area to help prevent these kind of irreversible environmental effects. This is where non-formal education methods come in as important to help people understand the causes and reasons for action needed, even before the situation has become an obvious experienced problem for them.

#### 4.2.2      What Kinds of Needs Come Out of the Literacy? Classes?

This question, and the following two, were given to me by UMN HQ Education Secretary David McConkey in 1991, as suggestions for subjects to examine in my Master's project. He felt they were important to aid both the planning of Jajarkot Project, and future projects of the same kind.

During the course of the basic literacy classes process in Jagtipur VDC, an assortment of needs could be observed to be of importance to the participants and their communities. The following were the ones I heard about that people had requested assistance with:

- Drinking water systems needs, such as: Installation of new ones. Repair, maintenance and community organization for those already installed by the government water office.

- Public forest management needs, such as: Harvest control, plantation, protection of existing plantations and official registration of community ownership of the public forest used.

- Irrigation needs.

- Rural electrification needs.

Then there were other needs which were not expressed as request for assistance, but nevertheless were mentioned as problems:

- Need to increase agricultural productivity.

- Need to decrease time spent on collection of firewood, animal fodder and bedding, i.e. these resources are getting



Fig. 24: Jhapra women on their way to collect leaves, used for animal bedding, from the forest.

overtaxed in nearby forests and people have to go further and further to gather.

- Need for cash income generation other than migrating to India during the winter.

- Need to improve local school management.

- Need to improve local health post management.

- Need to limit production and use of alcohol and tobacco.

A third category of needs, are those observed by us as outsiders, even though they were not expressed as felt by the participants:

- Nutrition, for child survival and disease resistance.

All kinds of problems caused by malnutrition are very

common, such as: Measles complications, including many deaths; vulnerability to continuous colds and flu, and many other diseases.

-Environmental sanitation for controlling disease. Latrine use is almost non-existent and disease spread by human faeces abound.

-Limit smoking and alcohol consumption, which both deplete meager agricultural, food grain and fuel resources, and cause many serious health problems.

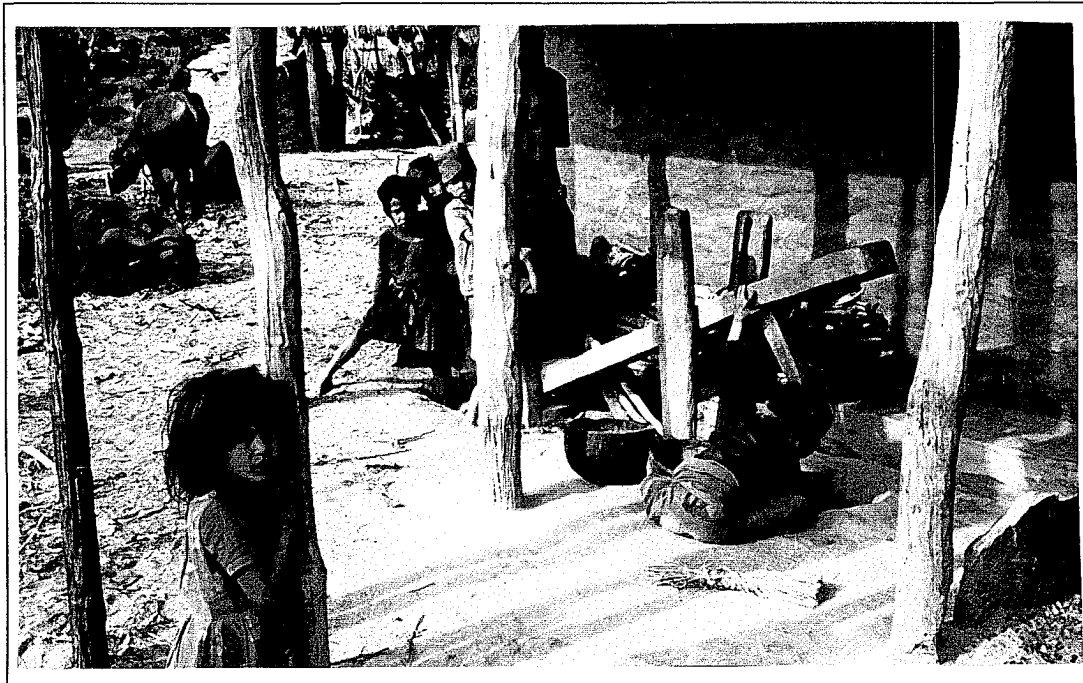


Fig. 25: No time for school for these children in Amanigaun, who were orphaned when their father fell to his death while drunk. With no father, the family is even more dependent on the children's labor. Here they are hulling rice.

-Improved stoves that limit the smoke in the houses, which cause and aggravate many respiratory illnesses. The improved stoves also decrease fuel-wood consumption.

-Management of all forests to prevent erosion, drying out of springs, and future fodder and fuel scarcities.

-Private fodder tree plantation to decrease the need to harvest in public forests.

-Terrace edge stabilization by planting non-competing fodder and fruit tree species.

-Increase number of children, especially girls, that are sent to school.

#### 4.2.3      Which of these Needs Should the Project Respond to with Assistance?

In the process of deciding on which of the needs expressed by participants the project should act on, the following questions should be asked:

-Can we find local government or NGO resources for assistance to direct the villagers to with this need? This question is very important, because of the policy guidelines already established for the project. Those are that the project should as much as possible be a facilitating organization, showing the way for participants to gain access to technical and material assistance. Only in very special circumstances is the project planned to consider being the implementing organization and/or the dispenser of material assistance (see Appendix F). This planning is based on the awareness that whatever structures the project creates, are only temporary, while the local government and



indigenous NGOs are what the people will have to rely on for long term.

-Is there any evidence that the people have tried to solve this problem with whatever resources they have at hand? This should be asked as an aid to determine whether or not people are really seriously motivated to act on a certain need. If they have tried to do something about it, we can know for sure that they are really motivated. (See the Madhubasa example in section 4.1.3.1, page 115-117).

-Is it a need expressed by (or seen to be important to) the most powerless and disadvantaged in the community? We have to keep the project's focus on serving the most disadvantaged, in mind. Many times a need concerns the whole community, and cannot be met for part of the community separately. But when there are many possible activities for the project to consider, the ones specifically serving the needs of the most disadvantaged should take precedence.

-Is this a need that can be met by the resources of UMN's Rural Development Center (RDC)? If the need cannot be met by the assistance of local government or NGOs, it might be possible to meet the need by training and consulting assistance from RDC. The project would be the facilitator of the contact with RDC (which is located in Pokhara).

-Can action on this need be taken with full participant ownership and participation in the total process of planning and implementation? This must be answered positively to make the activity qualify for the conditions set up in the

project planning. In Appendix F, Bob Gsellman's planning paper on "Activities in the Community Action Year", under point I-1-c, it is stated:

We do not intend to:

- 1) Give loans or grants directly.
- 2) Do activities (development) without the community or "for" the community.
- 3) Take control or responsibility for community development activities.

If the answer to the above questions are yes, then that particular need should be considered for action. Another important factor to take into consideration is also what can realistically be handled by the project organization.

#### 4.2.4      How can we Assess People's Understanding of Their Needs?

Some important factors to enable the project to assess people's understanding of their own real needs are:

-A project organization small enough for contact with the grass root level to be maintained.

-Field workers and all levels of staff living closely as members in the communities that are participating in the project's activities.

-Attitudes, terminology and mode of organization that create trust in the project enough for people to be honest rather than saying just what they think we want to hear.

-The literacy classes are an important medium for raising awareness on real needs, as well as for close enough

contact with people to understand some of their thoughts more in depth. It is also useful for getting into contact with the poor and powerless of the community, which are our priority target groups.

#### 4.2.5 Are Class Management Committees Necessary or Not?

In January I went for a one week seminar for program coordinators and senior supervisor level staff from all UMN projects with NFE programs. One of the questions discussed was whether or not it is necessary to have class management committees (as they are commonly made up, with non-class-participant village leaders, and one facilitator and one participant representative) to help supervise the adult literacy classes in all their activities.

Among those of us who thought committees made up of village leaders, are not necessary, the key concerns were:

- Committees as they are organized in most projects do not really function as planned and necessary.

- Why should leaders who are only concerned about their own political power, make decisions about the literacy learners (and about their class fund money) who are mostly representing the poor and powerless?

The conclusions of the group who wanted to revise how class management is organized in most projects, were:

- The class should organize their own management committee with members from amongst themselves. Leadership posts should preferably be rotated among participants. This

will give maximum ownership and responsibility for their own learning situation. It will also give practice in useful skills for community organization for other development activities.

-If the class feels that they need the support of village leaders, they should themselves decide who to co-opt to their management committee.

-If a village leader committee is needed to get the class program started, this should be a temporary institution, which should hand over responsibility as soon as the class can organize themselves.

#### 4.3 Conclusion.

##### 4.3.1 About Jajarkot Project.

Jajarkot Project is probably the most challenging venture undertaken by UMN in the field of adult literacy so far. We have 9 years of opportunity to work with the people of the district, and together with them create something that will be of true value for the development of their communities.

In the previous sections I have offered my thoughts and recommendations about issues that I feel the project needs to deal with in order to promote success. Here I just want to add some comments on one of the issues.

I feel that the by far most crucial issue is that of the size of the project. The development scene is littered with projects that were full of very good intentions and policies, but failed to carry those all the way through to the level of the people. If we do not want Jajarkot Project to become another one like that, we have to keep it to a size which allows our ideology about how to work with people, to permeate through to all staff and participants.

#### 4.3.2      For Other Projects.

For those involved in the planning of other projects, the points of the previous reflective sections, may serve as ideas for issues that need to be taken into consideration by any project trying work with communities in adult literacy and other development activities.

APPENDIX A.

AGREEMENT BETWEEN  
HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT OF NEPAL  
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE  
AND  
THE UNITED MISSION TO NEPAL  
ON  
NON-FORMAL EDUCATION PROJECT IN JAJARKOT DISTRICT.

His Majesty's Government of Nepal, Ministry of Education and Culture (HMG/N, MOEC) and the United Mission to Nepal (UMN) being desirous of establishing a non-formal education project in the Jajarkot District of Nepal, have agreed as follows:

ARTICLE 1

Purpose

1.1 In light of the goals set for the education sector of the HMG/N and the high emphasis being put on Adult Literacy, the purpose of this project will be to run Non Formal Education (NFE) classes and activities in the target area so as to enable adults in the age group 15-45 to learn to read, write and calculate and to develop the awareness and skills necessary for positive local and personal development.

## ARTICLE 2

### Scope of Involvement

2.1           The project will be conducted in the southern, most populous part of Jajarkot District during the 3 ½ year Phase I period. It is understood that further Phase II and Phase III extension will be negotiated to cover the period up to the year 2000 and which will include an expansion of the target area.

2.2           The project will use HMG/N's basic literacy and numeracy primers.

2.3           Although the primary focus will be on literacy, numeracy and awareness raising, the project will also seek to give income generating skills to neo-literates through post-literacy and continuing education programmes. It will also encourage action stimulated by discussion themes in the HMG/N literacy primer.

2.4           The project will start small and expand as requests from motivated villages are received.

## ARTICLE 3

### Responsibilities of UMN

3.1 UMN shall provide free of cost to HMG/N, the services of up to five expatriate personnel as follows:

Project Director

NFE Specialist

NFE/Community Development Specialists x 2

Income Generation Specialist

3.2 UMN shall also be financially responsible for the Nepali personnel needed to carry out the project.

3.3 UMN shall provide the necessary training, supervision and financial support for the required Nepali personnel.

3.4 UMN shall be responsible for financing the project within the limits of its available resource and approved budget of RS. 4.7 million (excluding expatriate technical assistance) in the first 3 ½ year phase.

3.5 UMN shall handle the finances and keep a separate account of its expenses relating to the fulfillment of its responsibilities stated herein. Such accounts shall be audited by the UMN and shall be available for inspection by HMG/N at all times.



3.6 UMN shall seek funding for literacy materials during the first phase of the project. Subsequently, HMG/N shall provide such materials, subject to the policy of the Ministry of Education at that time.

#### ARTICLE 4

##### Responsibilities of HMG/N

4.1 HMG/N shall ensure that necessary visas and other facilities are granted to expatriate UMN personnel and their families working under this agreement, in accordance with the conditions of the UMN General Agreement.

4.2 From the start of the project, the local District Education Inspector's office will be involved by giving input concerning the plans, activities, supervision, and coordination of the project.

#### ARTICLE 5

##### General Conditions

5.1 This agreement shall be subject to the terms and conditions of the UMN/HMG General Agreement dated 20th November 1990 and any subsequent renewal of that agreement.

5.2 This agreement shall be valid for 3 ½ years from the date of signing.

# APPENDIX C.

## BOB GSELLMAN'S NOTES ON GRADING SYSTEM FOR INTERVIEWS.

### W. Women's Issues

Some involvement		Helped form women's group, very active
0	5	10
*	*	*
Is woman.		

### E. Experience in NFE

Never heard of it	Taught a basic level class	Taught well
0	5	10
*	*	*

### R. Rural Commitment

Never thought of it	Willing but no experience	Really committed
0	5	10
*	*	*
Home is remote		

### K. Knowledge of community Development themes

Short workshops	Can recount teachings	Major trainings	Studied comm. dev. (KTS)
0	5		10
*	*		*

### M. Maturity

Like a little kid	Normal for age	Commands respect /authority
0	5	10
*	*	*
(Level of maturity needed for job)		

### S. Social Activism Until Now.

Never		Many activities over a long time
0	5	10
*	*	*

Interview question examples:

- Why do you want to work in this project?
- What is your vision?
- What have you done to help poor people?
- Why should we teach poor people to read and write?
- What do you think is the best way to help poor people?
- Do you have any improved technology items in your home?  
What kinds? Who introduced them?
- Experience: Ever built a latrine? Ever made and used  
rehydration solution?
- How do you feel about living in a remote area?

## APPENDIX D.

### NFE WORKER TRAINING SCHEDULE.

1991-08-19 - 09-13 (BHADAU 3-28, 2048) 4 WEEKS X 6 DAYS.

Scheduled subjects (in order of appearance):

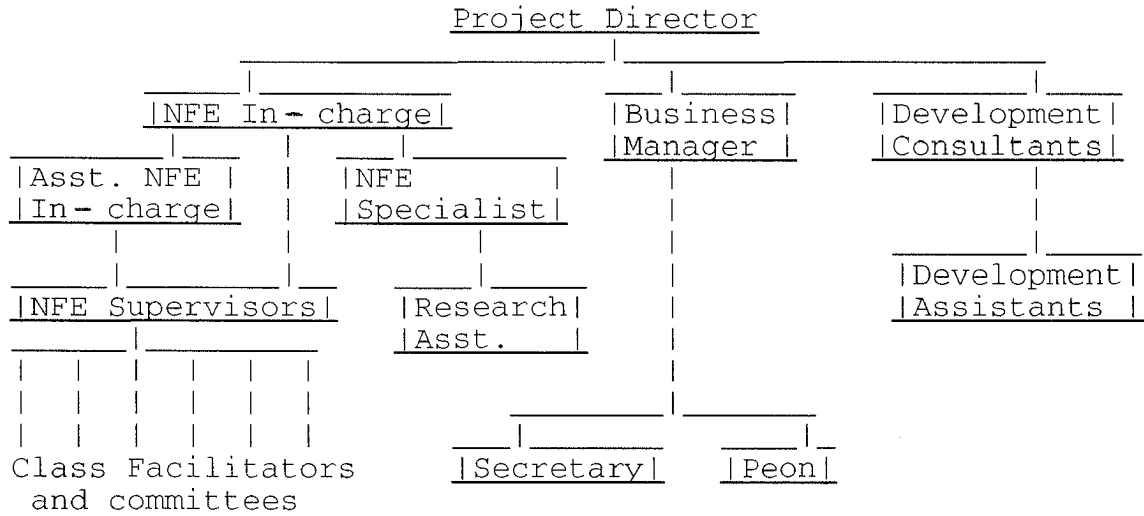
- Registration.
- CDO: -Administration's involvement and support for NFE.
- What is development? -Development concepts.
- What is education and its types?.
- Norma: -Supervisor's role. -NFE vs literacy.
- Three types of communication skills.
- Facilitator as change agent and her/his role.
- Subasi: -"Why" group discussion.
- Norma: -Different kinds of methodologies.
- Norma: -How adults learn, obstacles to learning.
- Key principles of Paolo Freire.
- Norma: -Role of women in community development.
- Public Health Office: -Health and preventative medicine in Jajarkot.
- Organizing village people for their own development.
- Interrelationship of problems.
- Feedback (trainees to trainers).
- Leadership and participation.
- Prevention of disease.

- Forestry Office: -Why and how of tree plantation (practical).
- Sanitation, Subasi: -Latrine building, why and how.
- Latrine building practical.
- Nutrition.
- Education Office: -Education in Jajarkot, what is NFE vs formal.
- Subasi: -Kitchen garden, why and how (practical).
- INSAN (Institute for Sustainable Agriculture Nepal):
  - Income generation.
- Agriculture Office: -Problems in Jajarkot.
- First Aid.
- Use of key words.
- "ka" questions. (The questions what, why, when, who, where, etc., all begin with the letter "ka" in Nepali).
- Group practice x 2.
- Feedback.
- Drinking Water Office.
- Use of picture discussion in literacy class.
- Group practice.
- Reading practice, how to read comics.
- Presentation about group practice x 2.
- How to use locally available materials in Literacy teaching.
- Group practice.
- Demonstration in plenary session.
- Veterinary lecture.

- Group practice, introduction to games.
- Group practice.
- Agriculture Development Bank.
- Group practice x 2.
- Math teaching - tally, add, subtract.
- Group practice x 2.
- Feedback.
- Introduction to numeracy.
- Group practice x 2.
- Numeracy + group practice x 2 x 4 days.
- Health discussion.
- Orientation to UMN.
- Evaluation by trainees.
- Written test by trainees.
- Closing program.

APPENDIX E.

PROJECT ORGANIZATION NOTES BY BOB GSELLMAN.



## APPENDIX F.

### NOTES BY BOB GSELLMAN ON ACTIVITIES IN THE COMMUNITY ACTION YEAR.

#### Year 1 - Basic Course

#### 2 - Post - basic Follow-up

#### 3 - Community Action

#### I. PRE-CLASS PHASE

1. At the time of searching for new classes and encouraging their formation, information will be given concerning our approach to various activities:

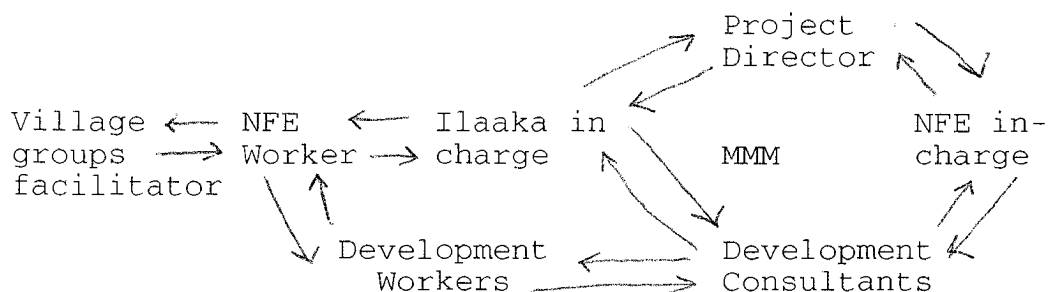
- a. There are simple to do activities that require no outside resources which will be taught that the facilitator must do, that will help to raise the standard of living: charpi, sanitation, smokeless chulo, kitchen garden, preparation of Jeevan Jol and Sarbottam Pito. etc.
- b. Later, we will be looking for other needs to help with - we may be able to give trainings, help in planning, evaluation, organizing the community for action. We can help connect groups to HMG offices, other NGOs, bank, etc.
- c. We do not intend to :
  - 1) Give loans or grants directly.
  - 2) Do activities (development) without the community or "for" the community.
  - 3) Take control or responsibility for community development activities.

#### II. CLASS PHASE (Basic & Post - Basic Years)

1. The activities mentioned in I. 1. a. will be encouraged, through demonstration of facilitators, NFE workers, and by discussions in the class. This must include information on why these activities are useful.
2. Through discussions in the classroom, and by interaction in the community, the facilitator and NFE workers should listen for local problems. By using the "why" technique, they should search for root causes and facilitate discussion on possible solutions.



3. During supervision the NFE workers should note these discussions, and facilitate further discussion with the class & local community emphasizing what they themselves could do, what solutions they have thought of. The problems & root causes should be noted on monthly reports and discussed with the Ilaaka-in-charge. The NFE worker should try to judge motivation, awareness of the group.
4. The Ilaaka-in-charge can either:
  - a) Recommend to the NFE worker what further action to take.
  - b) Become actively involved in facilitating the problem through the NFE worker.
  - c) Bring the matter to the Monthly Management Meeting (MMM) to seek advice, to inform consultants and project administration, to collate with other similar requests from other places, for direct action by involved consultant or his helper, or to determine that nothing can be done. Concerned consultants could then form a working group with NFE worker, Development Worker and Consultant.
5. Generally, bigger ideas will not be acted on in the first 2 years, but evaluated and plans made for possible activities:
  - a. Personnel - "permanent" or temporary.
  - b. Trainings.
  - c. HMG or other NGO's contacted /LDO.
  - d. Budgets prepared.
6. In the post-basic year - motivational mini-trainings will be organized by the Dev. Consultants and their Development Workers. They should visit each class and give messages on development topics: health, forestry, income generation, women's issues, etc. This would also be a chance for the class to interact directly with the Dev. Workers. The purpose of this is to encourage new ideas, possibilities.
7. In the post-basic year, groups will be encouraged to start libraries/ reading centers, in which (in addition to books for enjoyment) would be books with development related themes.
8. All inputs from above in the project should be channeled through or with the NFE Worker for the group. He/she is the key contact person between the village and the project.



### III. COMMUNITY ACTION YEAR (THIRD YEAR)

#### 1. Staffing:

Facilitator - unpaid (no stipend third Year), but probably still present in community as "informal" leader.

NFE Worker - 2/VDC (10 classes each) - 6 total/Ilaaka.

Ilaaka-in-charge- 1/Ilaaka.

Development Workers & Consultants - "at large".

2. During the third year, each NFE Worker would visit each of his classes at least once per month. He/she would mainly facilitate discussions, try to get people to think of root causes of problems, to work through solutions, to act on their ideas, to evaluate what has been tried, to re-plan, etc. Larger, harder problems to be brought to Ilaaka-in-charge, then to MMM as in II. 3,4,5 for evaluation & planning. As before, all input from the project should be channeled through or with the NFE Worker.

#### 3. Possible Activities:

##### a. Trainings

- (1) Personnel: Project Consultants/Dev. Workers

Local Specialists - KIFF, HMG  
Outside Specialists - UMN, other.

- (2) Sites: Local (at village)  
Central - Khalanga or Jhapra  
Outside - RDC Pokhara, KTM, other

(3) Topics: KIFF -Permaculture principles.  
Kitchen garden.  
Soil building.  
Nursery.  
Tree plantations/forest  
Management  
Water use.  
In-come generation-bees,  
weaving, fruit trees.

RDC - Animal health.  
Drinking water.  
Horticulture -  
Vegetable growing.  
Soil preparation.  
Bamboo propagation.  
Fruit trees.  
Forestry -  
User group  
committees  
Pvt. Tree planting  
Pvt. Nursery.  
Income generation.

DCS - Small turbines & mills  
appropriate technology.

Health - Nutrition.

HMG - Forestry office;  
Drinking Water;  
Cottage Industry;  
Public Health;  
Others.

Project Consultants: Health  
Agroforestry;  
Literacy  
(library).

Others.

b. Raising funds - local community funds.  
Income generation Projects.  
Facilitating Krishi Bikas  
Bank loans.

? providing materials /  
subsidy for some activities  
from project funds.  
? other sources.

- Survey.
- Supervision (expert).
- Community organization.
- Training in planning, implementation and evaluation skills.
- Training in business management.
- Advice.
- Facilitation of obtaining services from other organizations (HMG, other NGOs, etc).

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# NEPAL

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# GENERAL MAP

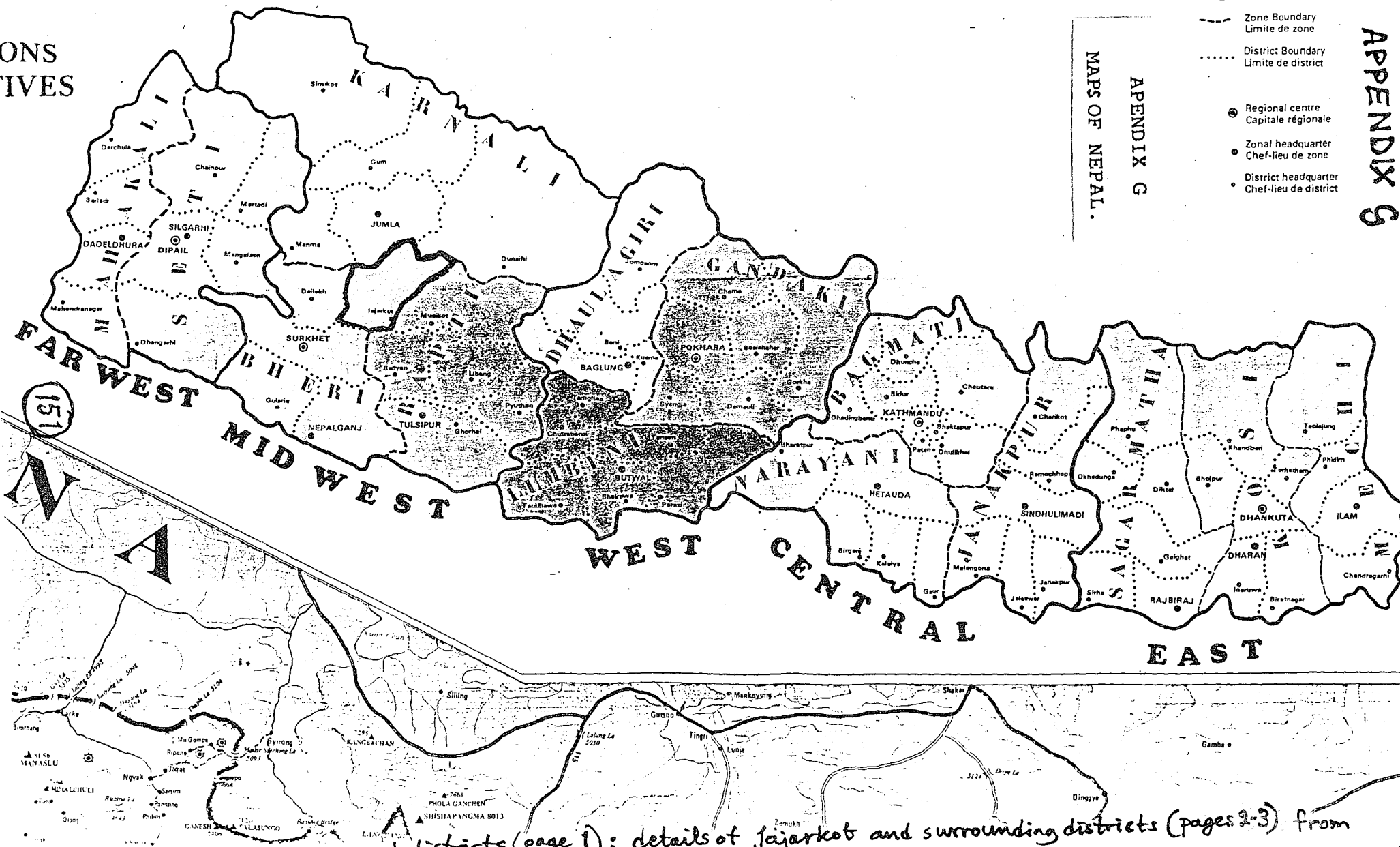
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APPENDIX 5

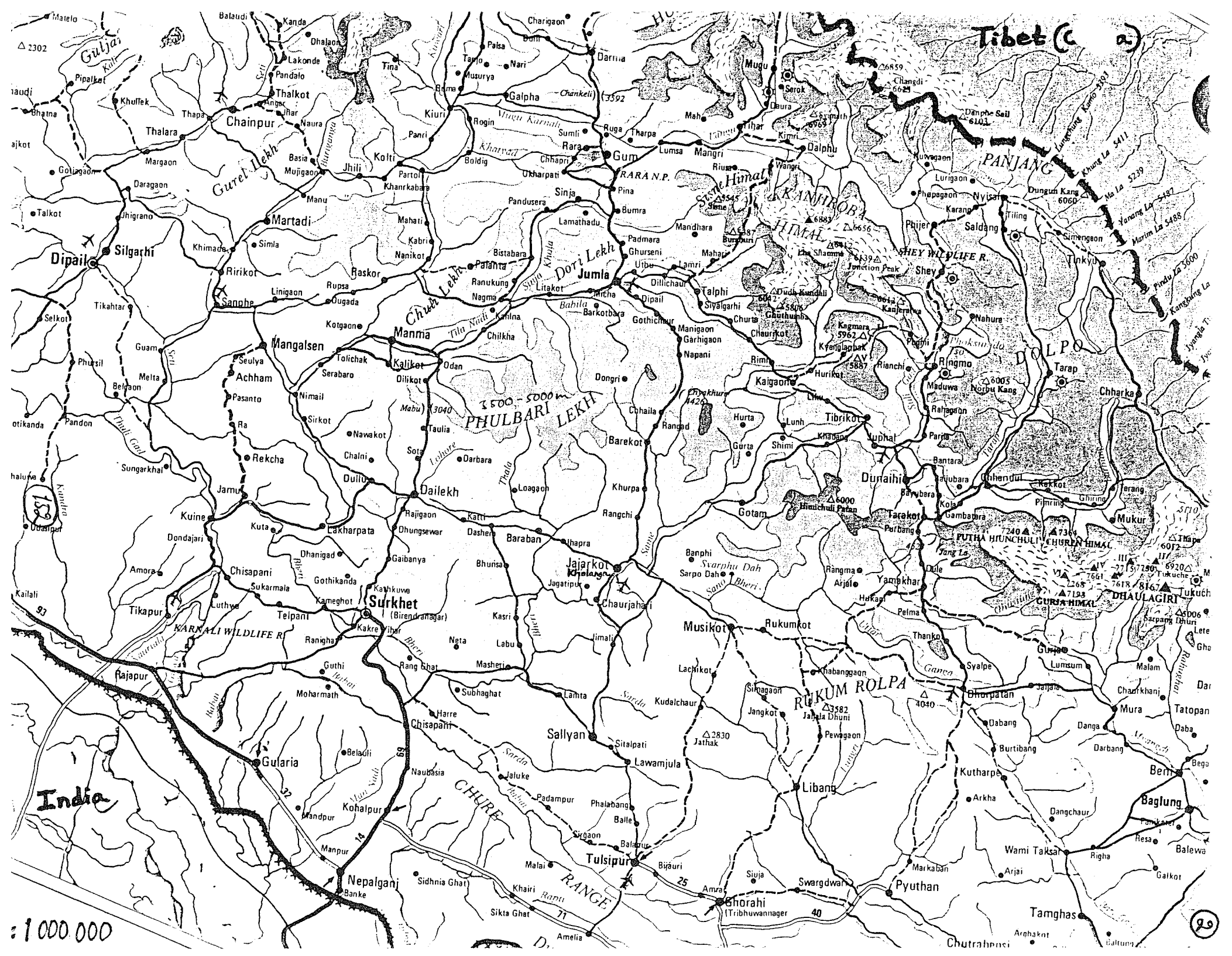
MAPS OF NEPAL.

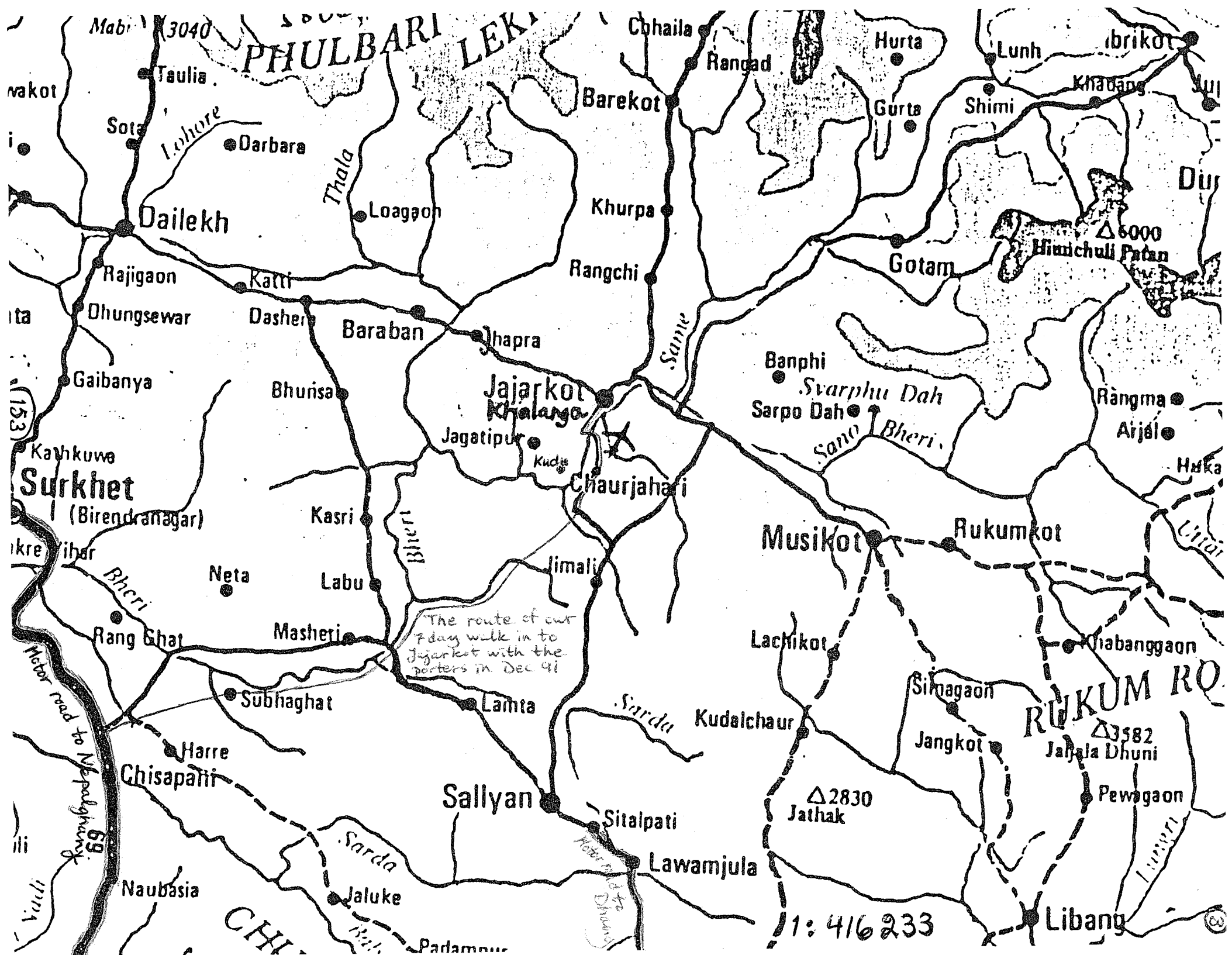
APPENDIX G

- Development region boundary  
Limite de région de développ.
- - - Zone Boundary  
Limite de zone
- ..... District Boundary  
Limite de district
- Regional centre  
Capitale régionale
- Zonal headquarter  
Chef-lieu de zone
- District headquarter  
Chef-lieu de district



Map of Nepal; regions, zones and districts (page 1); details of Jajarkot and surrounding districts (pages 2-3) from Nepal General Map by: L'Astrolabe-A Productions, 46 Rue De Provence 75009 Paris.





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